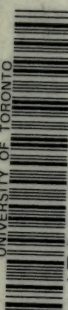



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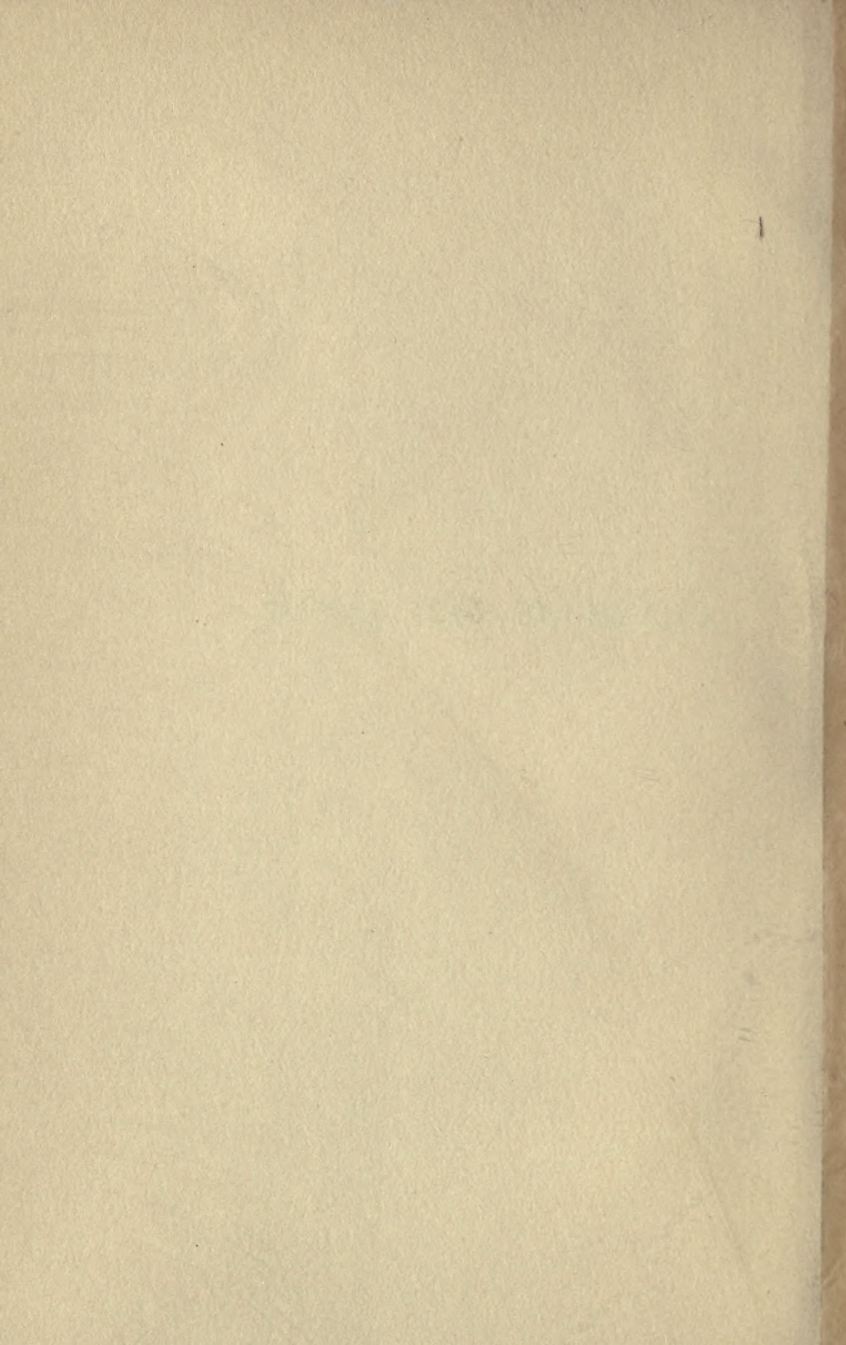
PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

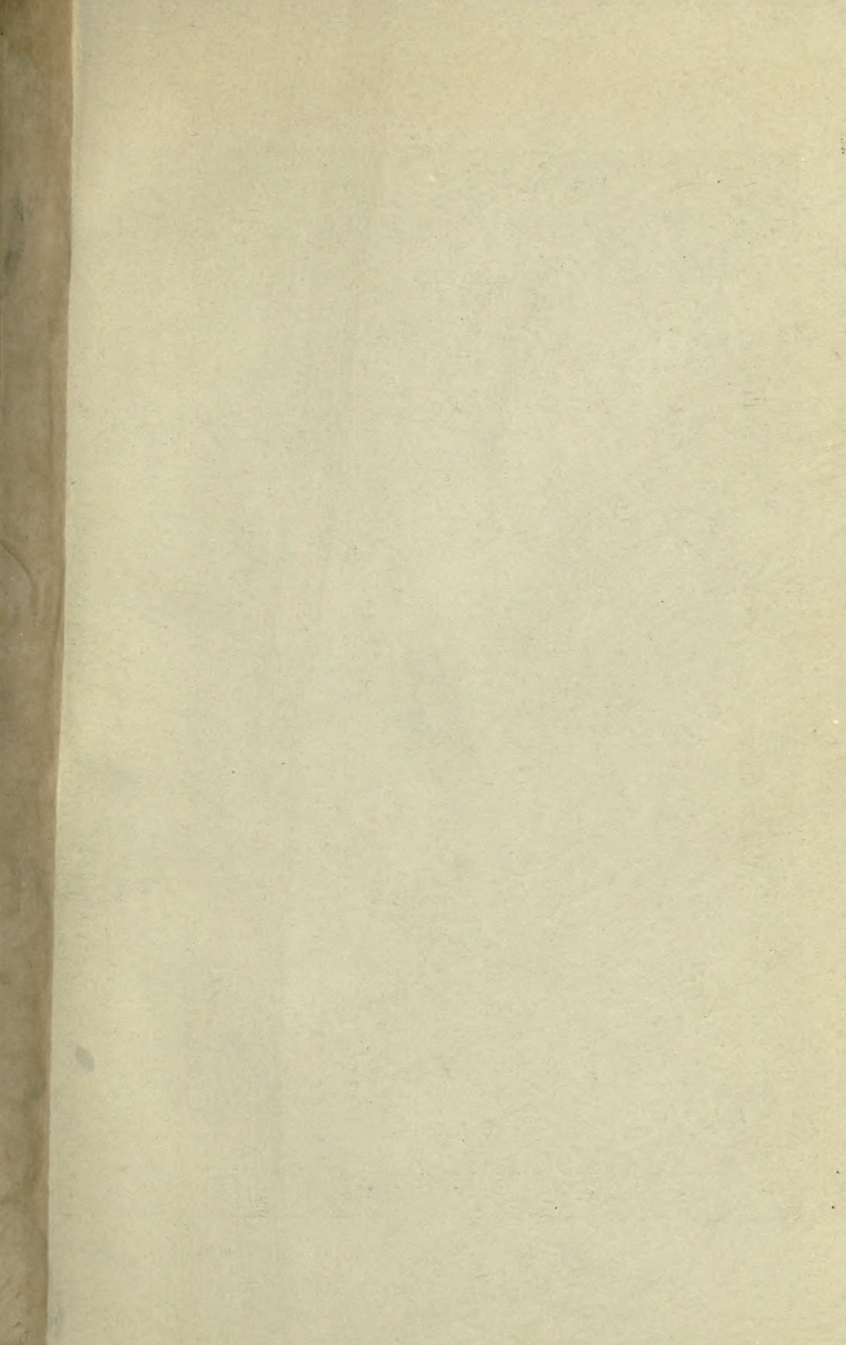
LEO DUREAN



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PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN





當德帝御機



市川小太夫
市村家機

形太田多七
主花屋多同筆

文久二年市村家機御機古今御機大入火機到

巴丁五子機

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PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

TRANSLATED BY
LEO DURAN



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NEW YORK
THOMAS SELTZER
1921

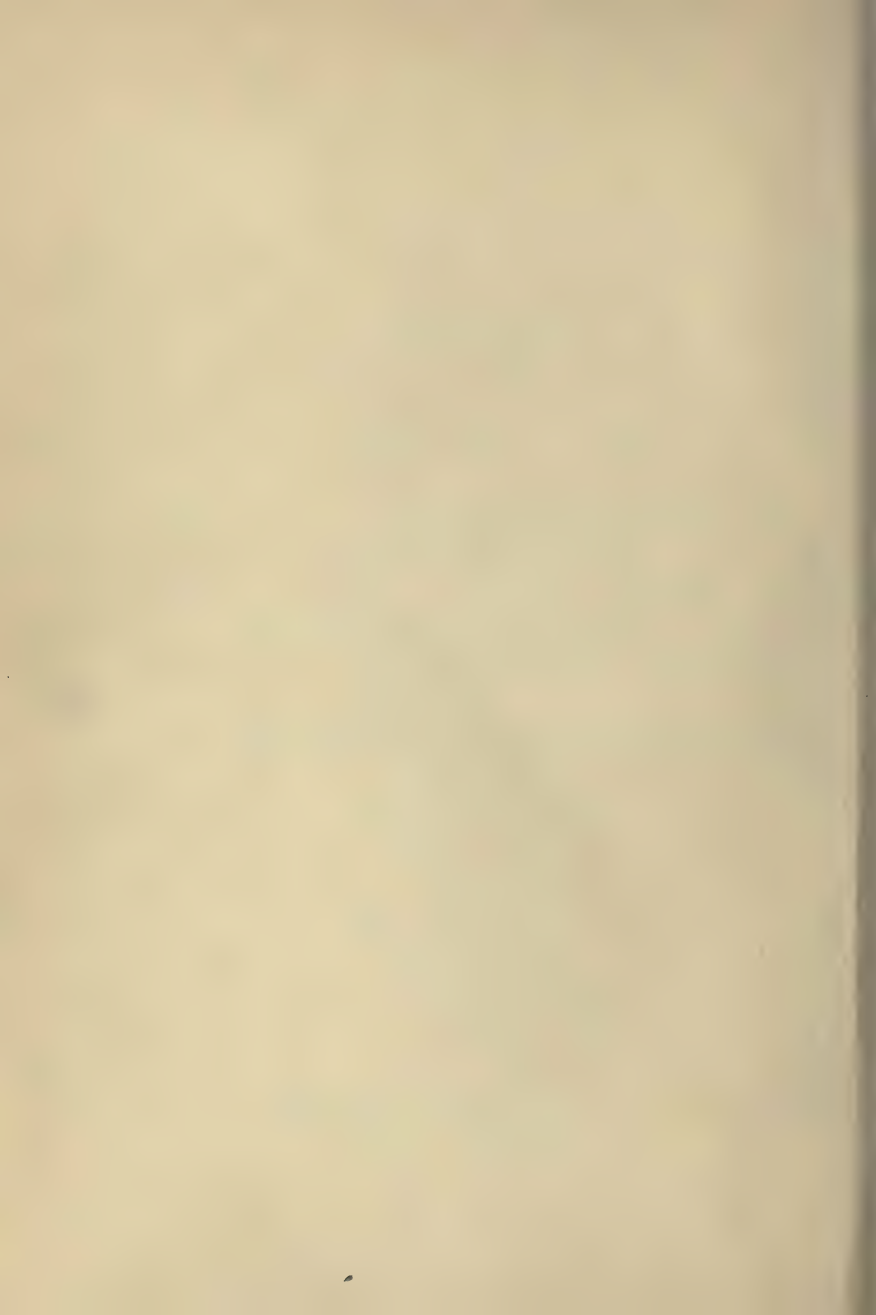
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE DAIMYO	3
THE HONOR OF DANZO	31
THE HORNS	55
THE HANDS IN THE BOX	79
FORSAKEN LOVE (<i>A Poetical Comedy</i>)	97



INTRODUCTION

Japanese actors are masters of absolute realism. The traditional art of their country requires a perfection of detailed mimicry that is not called for by the more impressionistic art of the Occident. Performances in Japan last eight hours, and incidents are allowed the time they would take in real life, so that every little act or expression connected with the incident is recorded by the actor. The death agony, for instance, lasts on the stage through all the throes and all the minutes or hours that it may take in reality.

A stranger from a western country might at first find the performance of a Japanese play exaggerated and tedious. After repeated visits, however, he would develop a deep interest in the emotional representations of the actors and find that the stage world was simply another world of nature, with all the fascination and thrill of life as it really is.

The old classic dramas of Japan and most of the modern dramas, therefore, although rich in poetic beauty, are too long and complicated to be literally translated. The

INTRODUCTION

English-reading world has become acquainted with them, more or less, through translations of celebrated scenes by several Japanese and English scholars. The most complete translations in English known to me are of "The Cherry Tree of Suma" by Yoshida and "The Forty-seven Ronines" by Anselme. They have been rendered into French in a rather fanciful way. Several short plays, including the famous "Terakoya," have been faithfully translated into French and German. And the "No," a sort of religious dance on legendary subjects performed by village actors or monks at certain festivals, have been made familiar to the English-speaking world by Lafcadio Hearn, Acton Chamberlain, and Miss Bacon, though none of these authors has written at length on the drama proper.

In New York I saw the fine productions of "The Darling of the Gods" and "Madame Butterfly," and abroad "Honneur Japonais" and "Princesse Sourire." They were picturesque, but badly acted and highly artificial, because it is impossible for an actor to impersonate a Japanese in the proper spirit without having studied the play in Japan.

In order to give a fair idea of the Japanese drama, the subjects of which are taken, both

INTRODUCTION

in the old classic and the modern drama, mostly from historic feats in the Minamoto and Taira wars and also from popular legends, I have selected scenes which to my mind are intensely thrilling and have an amount of sensationalism and horror of which we have never been aware. My aim has been to show what the Japanese theatre really is, namely, a mixture of brutality, delicate poetry, and wonderfully beautiful stage pictures and scenery.

The five dramas in this book are taken from many plays. Out of a mass of documents I have extracted a limited number of situations which I have put together in order to make five subjects, each complete in itself and offering possibilities for production on the English and American stage. Instead of the long, rather tedious dialogues that occur in the original, I have written rapid dramatic scenes giving an actor full opportunity to work himself into the spirit of the part.

Some of these scenes have never been published even in Japan. They have been handed down from generation to generation, and will probably be given on the Japanese stage *ad vitam eternam* on account of their scenic realism.

INTRODUCTION

The stage itself differs from ours in three important particulars. For one thing, it revolves, so that while one scene is being acted another is being prepared. Secondly, a flowery way one yard wide stretches on the left from the back of the audience to the stage. It is never absent. Max Reinhardt introduced it in "Sumurun," and later the manager of the Winter Garden in New York used it for the purpose of exhibiting pretty girls. In the third place, the Chorus plays an essential part in the action, much as in the Greek drama.

In the presentation of an old play the Chorus sits above the stage in full view of the audience. It usually consists of the talker, who explains the thoughts of the actors; the shamisen-player, who accompanies the talker and helps him by laughing or crying according to the action; and a flute-player, who, among other things, imitates the singing of birds, the sobbing of women, and the departing of souls. When the actors are silent, the Chorus has generally something to explain about their state of soul.

In "Forsaken Love," in this volume, the revolving stage and the Chorus are employed, and in "The Hands in the Box" the flowery way.

INTRODUCTION

As already stated, I have not found any complete study of the Japanese drama, old or modern, fertile a field as it offers. It is an institution that forms part of the very life of the nation. In Tokyo alone there are as many theatres as in New York, though few are large. The buildings are never more than two stories high, there being only one balcony; but they are wide, and the stage is in every case as wide as the house.

Famous theatres are: Kabukiza, Teikokuza, Tokyoza, Shinjomiza, Hongoza, and Meijiza. The leading living actors are: Uzaemon, Shikwan, Danyemon, who play at the Kabukiza; and Baiko, who plays at the Teikokuza. I was fortunate enough to see the famous actors Sadanji and Danzo at the Meijiza before they retired from the stage. The most famous tragedian of the nineteenth century was Danjuro.

Some ten years ago a clever actor Kawakami, husband of the once-famous Sadaya Ko, began to play translations of Shakespeare, Sardou, Molière, and other foreign dramatists. I saw him give "Hamlet," "Othello," and "Tosca." They were badly acted from our point of view, but pleasing to Japanese audiences.

The experiment met with success, and the

INTRODUCTION

result was the building in 1911 of the Imperial Theatre, the Teikokuza, as well-constructed and well-managed as the finest theatre in America. Old dramas are produced in it, modern comedies, operas, ballets. It features women actresses, who, as is known, did not exist a few years ago, because all female parts, as in China, were taken by men. Even today one must go to a theatre where a woman's rôle is taken by a man to see it really well done.

The Japanese public patronize the Teikokuza because it is fashionable and attended by the Mikado's family. But the real art lovers would rather sit on the floor in the little square boxes, where they can eat, drink, smoke, and—sleep when not looking at the wonderful stories of old Japan, the Japan that has survived commercialism.

LEO DURAN.

THE DAIMYO

CHARACTERS

JIRO DANYEMON, *A Daimyo*¹

NAMIKO, *A Geisha*

YASUI, *A Travelling Monk*

KOBUYE, *A Poor Woman*

SATO, *A Peasant*

KARAMORI } *Samurai under Danyemon*
SOGADAKE }

¹ Prince ruling over a Japanese province.

THE DAIMYO

The action takes place in the wooded mountains of Nikko, Japan, in September, the month when the maple tree is all red, and very beautiful.

Time: Eighteenth Century

The stage represents a little house in the woods of Nikko. Only one third of the house is seen, and it is opened on the side in view of the audience. A door, with steps, opens on to the stage. Another door slides outside in view of the public. Doors are ordinary paper doors. The open side can be closed with bamboo screens from inside. The house is raised above the ground on supports. On the floor of the same are an ash box, a large paper lamp, and some cushions. At the left side of the stage, which is supposed to be a public road, is a well, with rope and bucket for drawing water, arranged with a windlass to wind the rope. The scenery in the background represents maple trees with the leaves turned red. A torii¹ can be seen

¹ Religious arch.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

through the trees; also a bridge. When the curtain rises, it is five o'clock in the afternoon. The rising of the curtain is announced by a noise made by beating together two sticks of bamboo.

NAMIKO is discovered sitting in the house facing the audience. She begins to sing, accompanying herself on the shamisen.¹ She is richly dressed in dark blue and silver, with an obi² of orange and purple; gold pins are in her hair.

NAMIKO, singing

UPON the mountain there is dwelling
A little musume of delight.
All day her song is gay and bright,
With joyous birds the music swelling,
Her little house among the flowers
Holds me bewitched and ever pining
There till the dawn to be reclining
In sweetest bonds amid its bowers,
O Namiko!
Dear beloved musume of Nikko,
I fain would be with words beguiling
To tell you how I love your smiling,
Yet do I sing for an echo,
O Namiko!

¹ Japanese guitar.

² Heavy silk belt.

THE DAIMYO

[YASUI, *dressed in white, with a rosary and a bell, is seen advancing from the left side. He looks tired and, hearing the song, stops and listens to it.*

YASUI

A fairy concealed in this house so sweetly sings that I almost forget my weariness . . . what a long and hard road . . . This well will afford me great relief . . . I am dying of thirst. (*He draws a bucket of water and drinks.*) That water is superior to the wine I have given up. (*NAMIKO ceases playing.*) Perhaps a kind heart has need of prayers. The divine spirit will help me, and in return I may be given a little rice.

[*He rings his bell.*

NAMIKO, *putting her shamisen aside, and going to the sliding door, pushing it partly open*

It is a young monk. He seems very handsome for one in such a lowly profession.

YASUI

This is a wonderful apparition.

[*He lowers his eyes.*

NAMIKO, *sliding open the door a little more*

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

Hey! monk! Come nearer. You look very tired . . . you can sit on those steps.

YASUI, *not looking at her.*

I will not come near you unless you require from me the soothing prayers of the Master. If you request it, I will kneel down and say them a thousand times, until your house is blessed and the evil spirits gone.

NAMIKO

Yes, I do need comfort, and it may be well that you come in and recite the precepts of Shinto

YASUI

It is good of you to be thus observant. . . . May you always be happy.

[He removes his sandals and goes in after her.]

NAMIKO

Kneel here by the ash box. I will bring you some drink to give you strength.

YASUI

Thank you . . . do not trouble yourself . . . I had plenty of water at the well . . . I shall proceed.

[He takes his rosary between his hands and is about to pray.]

THE DAIMYO

NAMIKO

Wait, I think a bowl of rice will do you good.

YASUI

If you will permit me, I will pray first and eat the rice afterward.

NAMIKO

Do not be in such haste. . . . I really do not need the prayers so much. I am only a singing girl, and I have some important things to ask you.

YASUI

You should not try to tempt me, even if you are a singing girl. I will go.

NAMIKO

I am unhappy; can you not give me good advice?

YASUI

Consult an old priest who has sufficient learning and experience to tell you what to do for your salvation. I am only a poor travelling monk. I know nothing of the world, and I ought not to speak to young women, especially those in your profession.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

NAMIKO

My profession is not a happy one. But do not think that all geisha girls are immoral. I have only one master.

YASUI

You are very beautiful and he should marry you.

NAMIKO

My master is a prince. He is already married. A year ago he took a fancy to me when I was singing at the House of the Gold Peony in Tokyo. He brought me here and comes to see me once in a while. But he is terribly jealous and beats me often without reason.

YASUI

Poor woman! Does he not allow you to see anybody?

NAMIKO

I have some servants . . . and once a month he sends me under escort to my mother, who is the wife of Tanjiro, the Asakusa cobbler.

YASUI

I am surprised that a master could be so cruel as to beat one with such a pretty face. Can you not leave him?

THE DAIMYO

NAMIKO

If I did, he would know it in a few days and kill me.

YASUI

No man, then, ever sees you?

NAMIKO

If my master saw you here he would cut you open from shoulder to hip.

YASUI

Who is this terrible master?

NAMIKO

That does not matter. . . . All I want to know is. . . . Do you consider that a man has the right to beat a woman, even if he has a jealous disposition?

YASUI

A master is a master, and the law gives him the right of life and death.

NAMIKO

So, it is right that a samurai should treat women like swine?

YASUI

A samurai has no master except the daimyo, and if the daimyo beats his wife or mistress then a samurai may do the same, even if only to test the strength of his arm.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

But if the daimyo is displeased by such actions, then it is time for the samurai to commit harakiri.¹

NAMIKO

Yes . . . the daimyo. . . . But, kind monk, if you had a wife would you be so cruel?

YASUI

That subject does not interest me. I became a monk to be free from the snares of women, and I find that one may be very happy without women in his life. . . . Now I must go.

NAMIKO

Please stay a little longer. . . . I am glad you came. I am lonely here, and when my master comes it is terrible. He treats me so harshly.

YASUI

It is a pity that such a nightingale, beautiful as you are, should be wasting her life in the wilderness. . . . But . . . will you not tell me the name of your master?

NAMIKO

You do not know him. . . . Oh, he is away for a long time. The last time I saw his face, it was distorted with rage. Some

¹ Japanese suicide.

THE DAIMYO

poor people had stolen rice from his stores, and with a few samurai he was riding about the country trying to find the robbers.

YASUI

I see that if he should suddenly arrive I would lose my head.

NAMIKO

A nice monk like you should not be a coward. You see, he beats me, but I know how to get even with him. I make him drink so much that he can't walk any more, and then I play with him and push him down until he hurts himself and falls into the ash box . . . He . . . Hi . . . Hi . . .

[She mimics the scene and laughs]

YASUI

I am afraid you are wicked too.

NAMIKO

No, I am too young to be wicked. . . . I am only sixteen. What is your name, good monk?

YASUI

Kamiyama Yasui.

NAMIKO

Well, Yasui san, you cannot refuse a pipe of good tobacco. Here it is. . . . Take that pipe and smoke if you like.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

YASUI

I will stay a little longer and smoke a pipe
if you will promise me one thing.

NAMIKO

What?

YASUI

Sing the song again that I heard before I
came in.

NAMIKO

Very well, and after that we will have
supper together, and wine and more song,
and . . .

YASUI

No! No! Do not say such terrible things.
I shall go away shortly. Do you forget that
I am a monk?

NAMIKO

I have forgotten it since I took a fancy to
you.

YASUI

Religion forbids me even to look at a
woman. I deserve to have my eyes burned
out for permitting myself to gaze at your
beauty. I am ashamed!

NAMIKO

Smoke while I sing.

*[He fills the pipe while she sings the
words of the song, looking at him]*

THE DAIMYO

meantime in a bewitching way. After a little while he gazes at her intently and a strong emotion can be seen on his face. Suddenly a long, low bugle call is heard in the distance. YASUI drops his pipe and NAMIKO her shamisen.

Did you hear?

YASUI, *prostrating himself and shaking all over*

I know that call; the daimyo Jiro Danyemon, Lord of Nikko, is hunting in the woods and is probably coming this way.

NAMIKO

Yes . . . it is true . . . but why do you tremble so? He is still far away and may not come near us.

YASUI

Yes . . . but if he does come, and fancies calling on you, and discovers me, a monk, in this place . . . he will have me hanged at the well. . . . I know how cruel he is. Give me my sandals. . . . I shall go immediately.

NAMIKO

You have about as much heart as a dove. . . . Go away if you are afraid, but listen to this . . . I want you to come back tonight.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

YASUI

No, I shall be far away from here.

NAMIKO

Listen, I tell you. I want you to make me happy. If the daimyo does not come here, or if, after having stopped here he has departed, I shall light this lamp; it will mean that I am waiting for you, and you will come to me; but, if you do not see any light, then go your way and forget the nightingale.

YASUI

You are beautiful, but your mouth speaks evil words. I shall never return.

[He goes to the door, forgetting his rosary.]

NAMIKO

Never is a fool's word. We shall meet again.

[She pushes him out and closes the door sharply.]

YASUI

Where shall my trembling spirit guide me?

[He walks toward the well. The bugle call is suddenly heard very near at hand.]

How wise I have been to leave that singing girl!

THE DAIMYO

[He hurries to the well and pretends to be drinking. The daimyo enters in a stately costume of grey and gold, a black mask on his face, walking on geta,¹ and with two swords in his belt. He walks like a god, very slowly and very straight. When in front of the well, he stops but does not turn his head, then continues his walk. Two samurai, in rich costumes of grey and black, bearing their master's crest, follow closely, armed, but without masks. Immediately following them comes a peasant, dragging an old woman at the end of a rope. The daimyo faces the audience and one of the samurai quickly places a camp-stool under him. The other removes his mask and both seat themselves on the ground. During this action, YASUI slips away furtively to the left.]

DANYEMON, without turning his head.

It will be necessary to drive these dirty monks from my estate. They are good only to corrupt women and to sell empty words for money.

[NAMIKO, having arranged things in the room, goes out through the back door.]

¹ High wooden shoes.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

SATO, *kneeling in front of the daimyo with the woman.*

My lord, you have made me drag this poor woman, my neighbor, here. What are your intentions towards her?

DANYEMON

Leave her here a moment. I shall reward you later with a fine spectacle. (*SATO retires near the well after salutation.*) Woman, you have stolen from your lord; do you know that that is the worst of crimes?

KOBUYE

I took only a little rice for my starving family. My husband died last year in your service and my three little boys are sick.

DANYEMON

You could ask for food or beg in the street instead of robbing my stores. I shall have to punish you severely for this.

KOBUYE

O lord! What is a handful of rice? Everything in the land belongs to you. Am I to die for such a small offence?

DANYEMON

What you call a small offence is a horrible crime, because if all my subjects took a handful of rice from the pile I should be reduced

THE DAIMYO

to poverty; therefore, an example must be made. . . . Sato!

SATO, *kneeling down*

Your order, master?

DANYEMON

Tie the rope around the shoulders of this woman and let her drink freely at the bottom of the well.

KOBUYE

Pity, kind master! What will become of my little children?

DANYEMON

Do not be alarmed. I will take care of them until they are good and valuable servants.

[SATO *drags the woman to the well and does as directed; she, having her hands tied, cannot resist.*

KOBUYE

Spare me! Spare me! . . .

[SATO *pushes her into the well and the rope can be seen going down by the revolutions of the wheel.*

SATO, *kneeling down*

I am a very low servant of my lord, but I beg of him to shorten the life of this poor old woman. She will suffer a long time.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

DANYEMON

What business is it of yours? Will you go with her down there? Pull her out presently.

[It is to be noted that neither the daimyo nor the samurai ever look at the well. SATO, very quickly but with effort, draws the woman up. Her hair is hanging down and water is streaming from her clothes. She is almost choking.]

Do not touch her, Sato. . . . Woman . . . I have forgotten to ask you what you intend to do with the little house and yard where you made your home.

KOBUYE

My lord . . . it . . . is . . . yours. . . .
To . . . whom . . . could it belong? . . .
My husband . . . children . . . lived happy
there . . . please . . . spare my life.

DANYEMON

It is well that you give your property to your lord. I shall see that your boys are brought up as samurai, members of my body-guard. Sato, let her down.

SATO

Kind lord!

DANYEMON

Sato, do your duty.

THE DAIMYO

[SATO lets her down. NAMIKO has come out since the last three sentences were spoken, and through the slightly opened door has observed the scene. She opens the door wider and kneels down.

NAMIKO

O kind master! Jiro Danyemon san; deign to spare this poor woman; pull up the rope. Do it for me. I shall be so grateful.

DANYEMON

Who dares to address me in such a manner?

[SATO, without waiting, pulls on the rope and KOBUYE reappears in a still worse condition, blood flowing from her mouth.

NAMIKO, crying

Namiko speaks to you, dear lord. It is a terrible thing to make an old woman suffer like that. End her suffering for my sake.

DANYEMON

Women ought to stay where they belong, in bed or in the kitchen. It is enough; I will decide.

[He draws his long sword slowly and with one stroke, without looking at the suspended woman, cuts the rope

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

above her so that she drops to the bottom of the well. SATO looks down horrified. DANYEMON stands up.

Sato, my retainers shall escort you to your house, as it is getting dark, and you shall receive one ryo ¹ for your work. Say to all that the justice of the daimyo is great.

SATO, *kneeling down*

Thus I shall say: "The justice of our lord the daimyo is great."

[DANYEMON *dismisses them all with a gesture, then goes up the steps. NAMIKO is waiting for him, removes his geta and they sit on each side of the ash box.*

NAMIKO

Most honorable lord, your servant is glad to see you here.

DANYEMON

I have about cleaned the country of these vermin and, passing through here, I thought I would stop and ask you for a drink of wine.

NAMIKO

You do not need to ask, master, but take; all here belongs to you.

DANYEMON

I see that it is your desire to please me this

¹ Gold piece.

THE DAIMYO

evening. Well, I may stay overnight. You can prepare supper and my pipe.

NAMIKO

My heart is filled with happiness when I hear such joyful news. I am so lonesome. Why, you have not been here in thirty days!

DANYEMON

Do you love me still?

NAMIKO

I love you when you are kind, but not when you are fierce and cruel, as with the woman in the well.

DANYEMON

I do not wish you to interfere in these matters . . . Namiko san . . . I am very much in love with you. Every time I come here, I realize what a wonderful being you are. . . . I want to be good to you and will increase the allowance to your family . . . but you must be very nice and true to me.

NAMIKO

I am ever at your service.

DANYEMON

I will tell you what I want. You and I must be alone tonight. Let the servants retire to their quarters. Cook me some rice and tea yourself; also slice me a little raw fish.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

At the same time, bring me some of my good strong wine.

NAMIKO, *getting up*

I will do as you say.

DANYEMON

Wait! give me my pipe first. (*She fills his pipe, lights it and hands it to him.*) After supper I hope you will sing one of your love songs and I shall be filled with passionate desire.

NAMIKO

Your kindness overpowers me. Do you really care?

[*She goes out while he is still looking at her. DANYEMON then begins to smoke silently. Suddenly he discovers, on the floor, the rosary left by the monk. He knocks out the tobacco from his pipe while his face exhibits the most horrible expression of anger and becomes flushed with rage. He picks up the rosary and conceals it in his sleeve. As NAMIKO enters, carrying upon a tray a bottle of sake¹ and two red lacquer bowls, he at once assumes his former expression, but does not look at her.*]

Here I am with the wine you like.

¹ Rice wine.

THE DAIMYO

DANYEMON

Pour out some for me. . . . (*She does so.*) Have you drunk today with somebody else?

NAMIKO, *startled*

Certainly not! Who but my dear lord should drink so precious a liquor?

DANYEMON

It is well . . .

[NAMIKO *hands him the cup, and as they are on each side of the ash box, he bends over a little and looks steadily into her face, without moving, for half a minute; then, slowly, his expression changes to one of anger. His eyebrows move up and down, and she, more and more frightened, drops the cup into the ash tray.*

Deceitful woman!

NAMIKO, *thoroughly frightened*

Kind lord!

DANYEMON

How dare you look in my face after having entertained a monk of the street in my absence?

NAMIKO

I have not, my lord.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

DANYEMON

You lie . . . I shall kill you. . . . When
was he here?

NAMIKO

I assure you . . .

DANYEMON, *pulling the rosary from
his sleeve*

This is what he forgot after caressing
you . . .

NAMIKO

Oh! . . .

DANYEMON

Speak!

NAMIKO

Let me explain. He was a poor old tired
monk. He asked for food. I gave him some
in exchange for prayers which he recited so
that you should return soon.

DANYEMON

The monk who came out of here was not so
old as you want him to be. He is the one who
drinks my wine and smokes my pipe. Is he
your lover? Tell me the truth.

[*He takes up his sword.*

NAMIKO

He is not my lover: I swear it.

DANYEMON

If he is not he will be; I know you. When
is he coming back? Well, you shall be his

THE DAIMYO

. . . in my own way. Speak, now. When is he coming back?

[He threatens her with the sword.]

NAMIKO

Do not kill me. I will tell you. He will come back when this lamp is lighted . . . No! . . . No! . . . I mean when I light the lamp . . . he will understand that I need his prayers. But he may not come back. Why should he return? He only stopped here for a few moments.

DANYEMON

The beast left his virtue here with his rosary. Am I a fool? Can a man go his way in peace after you have cast your eyes upon him? It is enough; you deceived me and you deserve your fate.

[DANYEMON rises and draws his long sword slowly.]

NAMIKO

Master! Master!

[She rushes away into the back room and closes the door after her.]

DANYEMON

No, you cannot escape me, when I am sober.

[He goes to the door and tries to slide it open, but does not succeed. He then

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

lets fall part of the garment covering his right arm, which appears in a white undersleeve. Lifting his sword he cleaves the door apart from top to bottom and enters. A long crying and pleading is heard; then silence again, then the dull thud of a body falling.

[It has now grown dark; the moon shines out among the trees. The monk is observed approaching from the left; he stops to gaze about him.]

[DANYEMON comes out of the room wiping the blood from his sword, which he afterwards places on the floor. Then he lets down the blinds which conceal the room from the audience, so that his movements cannot be seen.]

YASUI, *sitting by the well*

What a wonderful night! The rays of the moon glide like silver among the autumn leaves. O glorious maple trees! What a splendid country! Not a sound! (*He looks at the house.*) She has not lighted the lamp. It is just as well. Perhaps the daimyo is now with her or else her lover has returned. Just the same I have had a terrible temptation. Poor Yasui! You are here at the door of a geisha instead of journeying through the

THE DAIMYO

woods of Nikko. The flesh is weak. It is wonderful how the voice of a little woman can change the heart of a man. The Master of us all is great in all his works. Now I must proceed over the Tokaido¹ and say good-by to this dream. (*Through the blinds the lamp is seen to be lighted.*) Do I believe my eyes? She is lighting the lamp. She is waiting for me. My heart beats loudly. It is like a fever. . . . I must drink . . . what! The rope is broken. . . . (*He fastens the bucket to the end of the rope, draws some water and drinks.*) What is the matter with this water? It tastes like blood. I must be ill. Shall I enter the house or run away from here? (*He advances slowly to the house.*) I have no heart . . . Oh! . . . the door is slightly open . . . it is safe . . . she will sing for me. (*He goes up the steps.*) What shall I do?

[*He stops and thinks deeply, then suddenly removes his sandals and enters the house. Once inside, he pulls up the blinds. NAMIKO is seen kneeling down near the ash box. Her back is turned toward the audience and she faces the back door, which has been replaced as it was before the*

¹ Famous Japanese road.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

daimyo cut it in two. Her head is slightly inclined toward the lamp, which is placed at her left, the ash box being at her right. YASUI, surprised at the silence of NAMIKO, kneels near her.

YASUI

Namiko san!

[He touches her slightly, and her head falls off and rolls on the floor. YASUI jumps up with a cry and takes the head of NAMIKO to the light of the lamp. At that moment the back door opens and the daimyo appears with a terrible, grinning face. The horrified monk, at this sight, drops the head. The lamp falls and dies out. In the same instant the moon, which had been slowly setting, disappears and nothing remains but darkness, leaving the audience to awake gradually as from a painful dream.]

CURTAIN

THE HONOR OF DANZO

CHARACTERS

DANZO, *An Outlaw*

MORI SHIJAWA, *Lieutenant of Police*

KOMURASAKI, *Danzo's Sweetheart*

O SUKI, *Owner of the Gold Turtle Inn*

COURTESANS AND SERVANTS OF THE INN

THE HONOR OF DANZO

The action takes place at the Yoshiwara¹ of Yedo.

Time: Seventeenth Century

The stage represents the reception room of the Gold Turtle Inn. The room is perfectly square. In the centre of the right and left panels are doors leading into the house. The back wall is divided in the middle by a door leading outside, through which the street, now deserted, can be seen. On the left side of the back door is a shrine containing a kakemono² and a plum-tree branch in a tall vase. On the right, a gallery with railings overlooks the street. From the audience, it has the appearance of a cage. This gallery can be closed from view by sliding doors. Flat cushions everywhere, also ash boxes. In the centre of the reception room a very large copper ash vase with a kettle on it.

The curtain opens to the sound of two split bamboos knocked against each other. It is four o'clock in the afternoon. DANZO is dis-

¹ Girl's market.

² Picture painted on silk.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

covered in an ordinary grey kimono, without swords, seated near KOMURASAKI, who is also in negligée, consisting of a short black kimono over a white shirt and a red flannel skirt.

KOMURASAKI

Oh . . . you are in trouble again, my poor Danzo. . . . What have you done?

DANZO

I killed Takuchi this morning. I have since heard that he was a good man, and I am sorry. . . . The police are after me.

KOMURASAKI

Why did you kill him?

DANZO

I need money for my ronines.¹ Robbery does not pay nowadays. I had to go out hunting. I met Takuchi. He would not part from his purse without fighting.

KOMURASAKI

You are a terrible man. Can you not keep quiet and lead a sensible life? I can earn enough money for both of us.

¹ Outlaws.

THE HONOR OF DANZO

DANZO

I need more money than all the women of this house could make in ten years, and besides . . . my responsibility is great. My army of thieves depend upon me to lead them.

KOMURASAKI

You are strong, Danzo, but the Sho-gun¹ is stronger. He has many thousands of soldiers. If they ever catch you what will become of poor Komurasaki?

DANZO

I will make it hard for the Sho-gun, for I have already defeated his private guard with my sixty-six ronines. Now listen . . . here is a purse . . . the purse of Takuchi . . . It contains a thousand ryo. Conceal it in your room and I will take it away later. I must be careful just now.

KOMURASAKI

Where are you going?

DANZO

I shall run away to the mountains until the excitement is over.

KOMURASAKI

I love you, Danzo. I shall suffer terribly if anything happens to you. Whatever you

¹ Governor of the state.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

do, never forget your sweetheart, Komurasaki, who thinks of you only.

DANZO

When I have piled up enough money to buy a large estate, a castle with soldiers to protect it, I shall marry you and we will be happy.

KOMURASAKI

How kind of you, my lord.

DANZO

But I warn you not to be too kind to men coming to this house.

KOMURASAKI

I assure you . . .

SUKI, coming in from the right

What! You again! Get out of here, Danzo. See . . . Komurasaki is not even dressed. I tell you, you spoil my house. I don't like you around.

DANZO, *laughing*

Do not get into such a temper, dear Madam Suki! I am a highway robber, it is true, though some of your customers are worse than myself.

THE HONOR OF DANZO

SUKI

They spend more money than you do. Look here, Komurasaki, who do you think is coming this evening?

KOMURASAKI

I have no idea.

SUKI

His excellency Mori Shijawa, Lieutenant General of the Police!

DANZO

I am going away from here.

SUKI

Yes indeed, and, my boy, forget your jealousy as soon as you pass the door because he is coming for no other than Komurasaki.

DANZO

Woman . . . I have a short sword that will cut your tongue clean off if you do not stop talking.

SUKI

You can take Komurasaki away if you are jealous. I will give her to you if you pay the price.

DANZO

I could give you a thousand ryo if I wanted to, but wait. I'll take her away and you won't get a sen¹ in return. . . . Beware!

¹ Not quite half an American cent.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

KOMURASAKI

You know, Suki always teases you. Don't listen. Go now, because I must put on my silk kimono.

DANZO, *rising and walking away*

Good-by. I shall return soon.

[*He goes out.*

SUKI, *pushing Komurasaki through the right door*

Quick now. (*She beats her hands together several times.*) O Tsuru, O Kiku, hurry downstairs or I shall have to fetch you with a bamboo.

[*She arranges the cushions in the gallery. Several girls enter from the right, wearing rich kimonos of light purple and white, with dark purple obi. Their hair is dressed very high and ornamented with gold pins. They walk in a stately manner. Their faces, well-painted, show no emotion. SUKI kneels down near the copper vase, and they kneel near her.*

I want to tell you that the head of the police is paying a visit to my house this evening. He may arrive in a few minutes, perhaps.

THE HONOR OF DANZO

He may choose to spend the night with one of you. See that he orders a good dinner and plenty of wine. He must not go out of this house unless he spends five ryo, you understand. (*The girls bow silently.*) Very well.

[*The girls walk to the balcony and kneel near each other, their backs to the audience, quite still, one of them smoking a diminutive pipe. Almost immediately, a samurai in a rich brown costume, with two swords in his belt and a basket mask on his face, comes near the balcony from the street. He stops in front of each girl, then seeing that one of the cushions is unoccupied, he enters the house. While he walks slowly in, SUKI pushes the sliding doors and closes the balcony from the audience's view. The newcomer stands still in the centre of the room. SUKI kneels down in front of him.*]

SUKI

My lord comes very early to the Yoshiwara. At such an hour the crowd is still outside of the gates and you are the first to visit my house today. I am very grateful. Will you be seated. (*The samurai removes his mask.*)

O Mori Shijawa. (*She bends so that her*

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

brow touches the floor.) My lord, this house is most honored by your presence.

MORI, *sitting down.*

Do not say a word about my visit. I come because I have a fancy for a girl of yours.

SUKI

Is it possible, my lord! Who is she? Have you not seen her on the balcony?

MORI

No. I have not recognized her. You must send for that beauty at once because my spirit is much worried about her.

SUKI

It must be the graceful Komurasaki. Wait a minute, dear lord, I shall call her presently. (*Claps her hands.*) Oie, oie! (*A servant appears at the right door.*) Bring tea and tell Komurasaki to come down at once.

MORI

Suki, I do not want people to know that I am here on account of a girl, because they might blame me for not leading my soldiers to hunt the robber Danzo.

SUKI

What crime has Danzo committed again?

THE HONOR OF DANZO

MORI

We know that he killed in order to rob the rich merchant Takuchi.

SUKI

Is it possible! Takuchi was such a good customer of mine. But here comes Komurasaki.

[KOMURASAKI appears. *She is dressed like the other girls but with a more elaborate obi and headgear. . . . She carries a gold fan which she uses as an instrument of coquetry towards MORI. A servant follows with a tray containing three cups and a tea pot. He places them in front of SUKI and retires.*

Come here, little one. The lord Mori Shijawa wants to speak to you.

KOMURASAKI, *kneeling in front of* MORI

Most honorable lord, your servant thanks you for the favor you bestow upon her by your presence.

MORI

I am a great admirer of your beauty, and I want you to pour a cup of tea for me.

[KOMURASAKI *prepares the tea and fills MORI's cup in the Japanese cere-*

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

monial manner. MORI drinks religiously and offers back his own cup to KOMURASAKI, which she fills and drinks.

SUKI

Well, my lord, would you not like to go to Komurasaki's room and enjoy a good supper? I shall send you the best singing girls and the first brands of rice wine.

MORI

Yes, I accept Komurasaki's hospitality. I am convinced that I shall be most happy with her for I feel my passion growing every time I look at her loveliness.

KOMURASAKI, concealing her face behind the fan

I am not worthy of your excellency. What charm has a farmer's daughter?

MORI

You are the most wonderful being I ever set eyes upon. By the way, Suki, at what amount do you estimate the charms of Komurasaki?

SUKI

Tonight will only cost you ten ryo. What do you think?

MORI

You shall get twenty. Let us go.

THE HONOR OF DANZO

[As they rise, DANZO comes in and shuts the door behind him. He wears a beautiful costume of black with gold ornaments. He has a basket mask on his face and two swords in his belt. Hearing the noise, MORI quickly puts his own mask over his face and walks to the right of the stage while DANZO walks to the left, where both stand perfectly still. The women are perplexed but do not move.]

SUKI, *pulling the sleeve of* KOMURASAKI
Come now.

MORI

Do not go away, women. Who is the stranger in the room?

SUKI

My Lord . . . I do not know. Will the honorable stranger let us know who he is?

DANZO

I may, if the samurai consents to sit here with me, face to face.

KOMURASAKI, *to* SUKI

It is Danzo. What will happen!

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

SUKI

Komurasaki tells me that she does not feel well. Will my lord let her go presently?

MORI

Not unless I go with her. But why this excitement? The presence of this dark-clad stranger seems to frighten you very much. Come now. We shall leave the room to him. Remember, you are mine tonight.

[He walks slowly to KOMURASAKI, who does not dare look up.]

DANZO, *sharply*

Wait!

MORI

Do you dare address me?

DANZO

I have the right of priority—over Komurasaki.

MORI

Do I hear correctly? O Suki, I am insulted in your house. It will cost you dearly. Speak! To whom does Komurasaki belong tonight?

SUKI

Good lord. Oh!

THE HONOR OF DANZO

MORI

Why can't you speak? Who is this terrible mask that both of you tremble like doves? I am not afraid of him.

KOMURASAKI

I pray you. . . .

MORI

Komurasaki, you belong to me. I want you more than ever. I am accustomed to have my own way even if I find a fearless samurai on the path. I know when one sees my face he loses much of his courage. So it shall be done, and may my rival in love tremble. (*He removes his mask and shows a horrible face. But DANZO does not move. MORI trembles with rage.*)

Hey, are you blind? Do you recognize Mori Shijawa? (*He laughs.*) You are lost, my friend. Let us see your face now. Come, come, you are a proud one. But I shall dispatch you quickly.

[*DANZO removes his mask and shows a most unconcerned face. MORI steps backwards and stammers.*]

Dan . . . zo . . . the . . . outlaw!

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

KOMURASAKI

Oh, Danzo. . . . What have you done?

DANZO

I have given him a shock.

MORI

Danzo here! . . . This is the greatest luck I have had in years. (*He pulls out a whistle.*) This whistle will bring a score of soldiers to escort you to jail.

SUKI, *staying his arm*

Please, most honorable lord, do not bring such a scandal upon my house.

DANZO

Women, leave us and keep quiet. We will arrange our affairs alone.

KOMURASAKI

Be careful, Danzo.

[*She drags the frightened SUKI out through the left door.*]

DANZO

Now, I would like to hear your whistle.

MORI

Why?

THE HONOR OF DANZO

DANZO

Because I have twenty ronines outside who will fight for my life.

MORI

So you have set a trap for me.

DANZO

I have not, upon my honor.

MORI

Then why are you here?

DANZO

I object to your attentions to Komurasaki.

MORI

What! To a girl who belongs to everybody! What are you to her?

DANZO

She has been my sweetheart for years and I forbid you to meet her.

MORI

This exception is flattering to me. May I ask the reason?

DANZO

She shall not be kissed by my bitterest enemy.

MORI

And what if I want her anyway?

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

DANZO

I shall be compelled to kill you.

MORI

Enough of this talk. I am a fool to allow a low class ronine to speak to a samurai. I will have you down before me and lashed like a dog.

DANZO

We shall see. A ronine may have as much honor as a Lieutenant General of Police. If you call me a dog, I call you a pig.

MORI, *bitterly*

A man who makes his living out of women is a dog.

DANZO, *drawing his sword*

Liar. . . . Draw your sword.

MORI

You are not worth a fight. . . . Still, I shall do it for the fun of getting Komurasaki.

DANZO

You may not see her again.

MORI

I will judge the valor of the famous Danzo.
[*He pulls out his sword. Both men have dropped their upper garment and begin to fight.*]

THE HONOR OF DANZO

My sword has never failed to slice a man from head to foot.

DANZO

Look out for yourself, you make too much noise.

[The men are evenly matched, but after a while MORI, seeing a pile of cushions at the left side of the stage, pushes DANZO on it with the result that the latter misses a step and loses his sword through a pass of MORI. He, however, recovers himself, and pulls out his short sword.]

You are playing unfair, Mori Shijawa.

MORI

Look out, look out, you are bleeding.

[They are now on the other side the cushions so that MORI has his back against the left side of the stage. The two men are at close quarter and DANZO is trying to prevent the terrible stroke that is coming down on him, when a spear shoots through the paper wall and enters MORI's left side.]

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

Foul play! I am wounded.

[He falls on his knees, dropping his sword.]

DANZO

What! Did I cut you?

MORI

You coward . . . (*showing the spear in his side*). One of your men from outside stabbed me.

DANZO

It is not true. See for yourself.

[He runs out and drags in KOMURASAKI.]

KOMURASAKI

Forgive me, Danzo. I saw him do that trick with the cushions. He was going to kill you. I could not bear to see it!

MORI

So. . . . It's you. . . . You have killed me.

[He falls on the floor.]

DANZO, *sadly*

Komurasaki, you have done me a great wrong. I have lost my honor in this fight.

THE HONOR OF DANZO

KOMURASAKI

Oh! Why? Why? You could not let yourself be cut down like that. Come now. Let us get away from here. Nobody will see us. Honor! . . . What do we care for honor if we can be happy. I have the thousand ryo. We shall leave the country or flee to the mountain with the ronines. Take me away. I want to be your wife.

DANZO

No. I cannot go anywhere now. There is nothing left for me but to obtain forgiveness from Mori Shijawa.

KOMURASAKI

Leave him here. This is our last chance.

DANZO

I do not want you any more. Danzo the ronine has never failed to follow the rules of honor in a fight, and he must pay for the disgrace of which you are the cause.

[KOMURASAKI *weeps*.

MORI

Water! water!

DANZO, *kneeling beside* MORI

My lord, I beg your pardon for the great wrong done to you. It is my fault, and I

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

shall not be at peace until you relieve me of your resentment.

MORI

Give me . . . water. . . .

DANZO, *pouring water from the kettle
and giving MORI the drink*

What will you say?

MORI

I am going to die. I feel it, and I hate you. You cannot obtain pardon from me.

*[He attempts to use the whistle but
DANZO prevents him.]*

DANZO

You must forgive me or I will not help you to die like a samurai.

MORI, *suffering intensely*

Will you amend yourself even if I ask the maximum?

DANZO

Even so.

MORI

Danzo, I shall forgive you on one condition, that you commit harakiri as soon as I am dead.

KOMURASAKI, *uttering a cry*

No. . . . No. . . . Not that!

THE HONOR OF DANZO

[MORI looks at her with a venomous eye and hisses horribly.

DANZO, *after a silence*
I will do as you say.

MORI
Help me to die now.

DANZO
Are you strong?

MORI, *shaking all over*
Yes. . . . I . . . am ready.

[DANZO approaches MORI. *Kneeling in front of him he suddenly plucks the spear from his side, and as MORI utters a loud cry he plunges his dagger into his heart. MORI'S head falls limply and he dies. DANZO places him against the wall in a sitting position with hands and legs crossed. He then pulls out the dagger, which he carefully wipes with the white paper that warriors always keep folded on their chests.*

KOMURASAKI
Danzo, Danzo, are you going to commit suicide? What about me? . . . Do you forget Komurasaki?

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

DANZO, *without looking at her*

You ruined our life when you struck my enemy. A man is a man and does not need the help of a woman in a fight. I must now regain my honor. Farewell.

KOMURASAKI

Pity, pity, think of me.

DANZO, *dropping his undershirt so as to expose his breast*

Oh, Mori Shijawa, see how serenely I take my life.

[He commits harakiri by cutting himself from the right side across the stomach, finishing with a cut to the heart.]

KOMURASAKI, *horrified, with a loud cry of agony, jumps up, and opening the balcony yells*

Danzo is dead! Danzo is dead!

[She acts like a mad woman. The girls rush in with scared faces, while on the left side SUKI also comes in, fainting at the sight.]

THE CURTAIN FALLS QUICKLY

THE HORNS

CHARACTERS

OBA, *A Rich Old Woman*

MOGI, *Oba's Husband*

OYUCHA, *Mogi's Daughter by a first Marriage*

A BUDDHIST PRIEST

WOMAN SERVANT

THE HORNS

*The action takes place in the country near
Osaka.*

Time: Sixteenth Century

SCENE I

The stage represents the living room of MOGI's family. As usual, the place is enclosed by sliding doors, which lead on left and right into the private apartments, while those at the back of the stage open on to a garden in summer.

The right side slides open and OBA enters. She is sixty, rather attractive, and richly dressed, but her face is cold and she never smiles.

OBA, coming from the right

Oh! what a cold morning. . . . Oyucha san . . . where is she? . . . The girl is terribly lazy . . . (calls) Soba . . . Soba . . . (a servant girl comes in) what is the matter? . . . You ought to be at work by this time. . . . Call Oyucha san at once . . . and be

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

quick about it (*exit servant*). I do everything in the house.

[The old woman goes about grumbling in angry tones and finally sits by the ash box.]

OYUCHA, *coming in and arranging her kimono about her*

Do you want me, Oba san?

OBA

Are you not ashamed of yourself? You should have been up long ago. No wonder the house is full of dirt . . . you must clean it every morning before sunrise.

OYUCHA

It is so early!

OBA

Why . . . it is five o'clock! Lazy girl . . . you have slept almost six hours.

OYUCHA

Well! I shall begin my work presently.

OBA

Wait a minute. . . . I want to have a little talk with you. I have been thinking deeply since last evening, and I want to know your last word in regard to Koriyama.

THE HORNS

OYUCHA

Koriyama is a very nice man, but I do not want him. . . . I repeat, he shall never be my husband.

OBA

Wicked girl. . . . So this is all the encouragement I get out of you? Now listen . . . it is your last chance. If you marry Koriyama I will settle all my money upon you so that you will become both rich and happy. All I ask of you in return is to be allowed to live here quietly with you all.

OYUCHA

And father?

OBA

Your father is a simpleton. He knows nothing except his flowers. He will continue to look after the garden. That does not concern him.

OYUCHA

I am his daughter and he thinks like myself that it is better not to marry Koriyama!

OBA, *beating* OYUCHA *over the head with her fan*

You stupid girl. . . . More stupid than a frog. . . . Daughter of a fool. . . . What can you do without me, you and your father? . . . You must marry the man I have chosen

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

for you. Since when have you got the right to refuse?

OYUCHA

You can beat me, but I shall not marry your lover.

OBA, *beside herself*

Aye . . . Aye . . . help . . . help . . .
bad girl . . . wanton. . . . I will kill you.

[She grasps the teapot and hurls it at OYUCHA, who runs away yelling into the arms of her father who just happens to come out of his room.]

MOGI

What is all this noise about?

OBA

Your daughter again . . . she insulted me
. . . I meant to kill her.

[OYUCHA goes out sobbing.]

MOGI

Peace, peace, woman. You harass this daughter of mine.

OBA

She insulted me in a terrible way after I had been kind to her.

MOGI

What have you done to be kind to her?
Did you not beat her over the head with a

THE HORNS

broom? . . . Since we were married . . . five years ago . . . I have not yet seen a sunrise without hearing you beating and her crying!

OBA

Is it my fault if she is not good?

MOGI

Woman . . . are you very good yourself?

OBA

Mogi san . . . today, for the first time . . . you address me with angry words! . . . You know that I can make you suffer for it. What can you do without my money? Do you know why Oyucha san makes all that trouble? . . . It is because I want to make her my sole heiress. Nice thanks I get from both of you! . . .

MOGI

Why do you want to make her your heiress?

OBA

I am getting old. It is time for her to be married . . . so. . . . I have made up my mind she shall marry our neighbor Koriyama, the stone cutter.

MOGI

It would be a good idea if Koriyama had

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

not left last night for Korea, where he is going to start a business of his own.

OBA

What do you mean? . . . Are you out of your senses? . . . He was here yesterday afternoon!

MOGI, *showing her a folded paper*

He has gone. . . . Here is a message I found under the door.

OBA

Read it to me.

MOGI, *putting on large spectacles and reading*

To Mogi, wife and daughter: My departure is necessary, I shall remain away a very long time. Farewell, Koriyama. (*Looking at OBA over his spectacles.*) I suppose you will regret him.

OBA

The villain. . . . He has done me wrong. . . . I loaned him money several times which he has never repaid. . . . Now this money will help him to start in business.

MOGI

I am glad he has gone away. There has been much talking about you and him in the country. A man of twenty calling so often

THE HORNS

on a woman forty years older, not even related to him, makes people think evil of such meetings. You have given him many presents, money and other things, and now, he has made a fool of you.

OBA

Dear husband . . . do not believe town gossip. I have given him presents hoping to interest him in Oyucha san, but the stupid girl never looked at him.

MOGI

Hum . . . I am afraid you wanted him to marry Oyucha san in order to prevent his running away from you. However, it is too late now . . . he has departed of his own accord

OBA

You have a wicked mind, almost as wicked as your daughter's. All your interests in life are gossip and growing turnips. Go to the garden, poor dreamer, and see whether the fishes in the pond are learning to swim.

MOGI, *shrugging his shoulders*

I am sorry you have so little dignity! (*He removes the sliding doors and the sunshine enters.*) I am going to the market through the wooded road.

[*Exit*

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

OBA, *calling out to MOGI*

You had better come back when the tea is ready. (*She claps her hands sharply.*) Oyucha san! (*Muttering*) Koriyama is gone . . . the beast . . . somebody will suffer for it.

OYUCHA, *entering*

Here I am, mother . . .

OBA

Here you are. . . . Here you are . . . monster . . . why do you always cry when your father is here? . . . Just to have him scold me? . . . Are you not big enough to take care of yourself?

[*She pinches her.*

OYUCHA

Oh! please . . . O! . . . please . . .

OBA

Your father is out . . . call him . . . will you . . . and we shall see what he says . . . make the tea now . . . hurry up. (OYUCHA *quickly prepares the tea without saying a word.*) Some good news has come to me since you went out. Koriyama has departed to Korea never to return. Hey! what do you say to that . . . what do you say?

THE HORNS

OYUCHA

I am glad . . .

OBA

Glad . . . you black sheep . . . glad, because you know I don't like it. Hey! Repeat that you are glad.

[She spills the boiling water from the teapot over OYUCHA's hands.]

OYUCHA, *badly scalded but suppressing her cries*

O, mother! . . . you have scalded . . . my hands. . . . How I suffer!

OBA, *chuckling*

Call your father; call your father.

OYUCHA

Oh! This is too much . . . look at them . . . my hands. . . . I die . . . please give me oil.

OBA

Oil . . . oil . . . for your hands . . . here's some ashes, some hot ashes . . . that will cure you.

[She throws the contents of the ash box over OYUCHA's hands.]

OYUCHA, *yelling wildly*

Oh! Oh! This is too much.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

[She gets up in agony and inadvertently upsets the teapot over OBA's knees.]

OBA, *crying in turn*

Aye! Aye! My leg . . . you have scalded me . . . Aye! You dared scald me. . . . I will kill you . . . you can't escape. (*Goes to the wall where some garden sickles are hanging and selects a large one.*) No use for you to run away . . . I will get you. (*She runs after OYUCHA, who, being much younger, has no trouble in evading the old bent woman; the latter with white hair hanging around her face looks like a witch.*)

OYUCHA

Oh! Please . . . please . . .

OBA

I'll disembowel you with my own hands.

OYUCHA, *running out into the garden*
Father . . . father . . .

OBA, *following her*

I am not afraid of your father . . . I'll get you . . .

CURTAIN

THE HORNS

SCENE II

The curtain itself represents a forest. A small house is pushed from the right wing. It is a sort of shrine like one of those seen on many public roads in Japan. The front is closed and there is a door on each side. The shrine is dedicated to the Goddess of Mercy and it is so small that only one person at a time can pray inside.

OYUCHA, running breathlessly from the left

Father, father (*she falls down*), I am so tired . . . this woman has no pity . . . she is so old, yet stronger than I am . . . I hope she lost trace of me . . . my hands hurt so much . . . what shall I do? . . . Where is father? . . . I am lost in the woods. (*She sees the shrine.*) There . . . the shrine of the Goddess of Mercy . . . I will ask her to take care of me. (*She gets up painfully.*) I must have been running a long time . . . I can hardly walk. (*She goes into the shrine and almost at the same time OBA appears at the left, looking more wicked and bent than before.*)

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

OBA

Where is she? Where is she? She leads me on a long journey, but I shall find her. She cannot be very far . . . I am not tired yet. . . . Oh! I hate her . . . I hate her more than I ever did. (*The humming of OYUCHA's prayer is heard from the shrine.*) Why . . . what is that? (*Smiling horribly as she realizes that OYUCHA is in the shrine.*) She is there! . . . I knew I was on the right track. . . . Now she can't escape. (*She walks stealthily to the shrine and arrives at the door.*) I've got you now. (*She rushes in, but almost at the same time OYUCHA runs wildly out on the other side, turns around and runs away to the left. OBA comes out in turn, but a strange thing has happened. Since she entered the shrine a pair of ugly horns have sprung out of her head. OYUCHA, while running, looks behind and stops short at the sight.*) Ah! Ah! You give up . . . you give up. . . . This sickle here will cut you up nicely.

OYUCHA, pointing at the horns
You You . . .

OBA

Me . . . yes . . . it's me . . . you ought to know. . . . Hey! what do you mean?

THE HORNS

. . . (*She comes to OYUCHA with raised hand but stops surprised by the startled look on the girl's face.*) What is this! (*She touches her head; feels a horn, then another. She drops the sickle and feels with both hands.*) Aye . . . Aye . . . help. (*She kneels down and tries in vain to pull out the ugly horns.*)

OYUCHA, *trembling*

You are a witch. . . . The Buddha has punished you as he punishes the heartless people.

OBA

Daï butsu!¹ . . . Daï butsu! . . . Pity, pity. . . . Oh! . . . these horns, these horns . . . take them away, Oyucha san; dear Oyucha san, pull them out.

OYUCHA

You will not hurt me? . . .

OBA, *clinging to her*

No . . . no . . . do not be afraid. . . . I will be good . . . but pull these horns out. . . . They hurt my head terribly.

OYUCHA

I will try, my good mother . . . I will try.

[*She tries, and then both try until*

¹ Great Buddha!

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

OBA's head is pulled to and fro, but
they do not succeed.

OYUCHA, *desperate, cries*

Poor mother . . . I cannot; they have
grown inside.

OBA, *beating* OYUCHA

Wicked girl. . . . It is all your fault. . . .
I am disfigured for life . . . a monster . . .
on account of you. (*She prays again.*) Dai
butsu! Dai butsu!

MOGI, *entering from the right side,
bare-legged, carrying a basket of
mushrooms*

There is much noise in this deserted place.
(*Stops startled.*) What do I see, my wife
and daughter! These horns! Why . . .
woman . . . what have you done?

OBA

Nothing, my good husband. . . . We
went into the shrine and these awful things
grew on my head instantly! It is terrible!

MOGI

I know. You can't go into the shrine of the
Goddess of Mercy with an evil eye. When
you went there both your eyes must have been
full of hell's fire to justify such punishment!

THE HORNS

OBA, *still pulling on the horns*
Remove them, Mogi san!

MOGI

The Buddha who spoiled your face is probably glad to know that young men will look at you with horror; even with all your money.

OBA, *choking with rage*
Oh! Oh!

MOGI

Let us go home and call a priest who shall pray and light the incantation fires so as to drive away the evil spirits.

OBA

What will people say when they see me!

OYUCHA

Come, mother . . . we shall do our best to shield you.

[MOGI *empties the basket and places it on the head of his wife, while OYUCHA, taking her stepmother by the hand, leads her out. MOGI stops to sigh deeply and follows them.*

CURTAIN

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

SCENE III

Several months later. The curtain is raised showing the room of the first scene with all doors tightly closed. MOGI is seated in the centre of the room with a Buddhist priest dressed in white.

PRIEST

What does the doctor say about her?

MOGI

He has given up hope. She is sinking every day. Her vitals are worked upon by some unknown disease. . . . She is so weak that she can hardly walk, and she sleeps most of the time.

PRIEST

Very strange. Neither religion nor science are of any avail!

MOGI

Yes, it is so. In vain you have burned sacred oils . . . repeated over and over your litany and called to your aid all the Buddhas past and present . . . they are deaf . . . and the horns stick more than ever . . . only they have become heavier.

THE HORNS

PRIEST

Well . . . what shall we do?

MOGI

As usual . . . make your incantations . . . it does her good . . . and almost always soothes her heart.

[The PRIEST arranges a kind of stove on which he will make a high fire later.]

OYUCHA, *entering from the room on the left*

Father . . . I think Oba san is very sick. . . . She whispered your name and probably wants to see you.

MOGI

Bring her in . . . the priest will comfort her.

[Exit OYUCHA. MOGI arranges some kind of bed with mattresses and blankets taken out of a closet. Presently OYUCHA and a woman servant supporting OBA enter the room. OBA has become very old and feeble. With horns on her head she is a frightful sight. MOGI and the PRIEST look at her pitifully. OYUCHA places her tenderly in bed so that she faces the audience. When she is comfortable, with

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

a look of scorn, the old woman repulses OYUCHA sharply.

Quiet, woman, quiet. The poor girl is full of kindness for you. Do you realize that for seven months she has been at your bedside practically all the time, helping you, attentive to all your desires? She has been better than ever to you and it is saying much. Why . . . a heart of stone would have been touched by such devotion. Still you persist in hating her. No wonder then that the Buddha is angry!

[OBA, suffering and moaning, begs for water, but the servant is so frightened by the horns that her hands tremble as she raises the cup to OBA'S lips. OYUCHA takes the cup from the servant's hands and very tenderly helps her mother to drink. OBA does not thank her stepdaughter.]

PRIEST

Shall I begin, Mogi san?

MOGI

Pray for us, please.

[The PRIEST lights the fire and flames

THE HORNS

mount high in the air. During the incantation he recites a litany, rubbing a large rosary between the palms of his hands. OBA suffers intensely, uttering long and low moans. OYUCHA hands her a rosary and she rubs it convulsively. Big drops of perspiration pour from her face, which OYUCHA wipes constantly. The servant, averting her face, kneels near the door, and MOGI, hands on his knees, with bent head, is absorbed in deep thought.

OBA

Am I going to die? . . . Ah . . . Ah
. . . Am I going to die? . . . Ah . . .
Ah . . . with horns? No . . . no . . . no
. . . I cannot.

OYUCHA

You shall not die . . . dear mother. . . .
We will cure you. . . . We will pray for
you so much that the horns will disappear.
Courage, mother, courage. . . .

OBA

I am a bad woman. . . . Ah . . . Ah . . .
I have no heart. . . . Ah . . . Ah . . . I
hate everybody. . . . I hate myself. . . . I
cannot be pardoned.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

OYUCHA

Yes . . . you can; you have a good heart
. . . if you want. Let us care for you and
everything will be all right. Just let us care
for you.

MOGI, *aside*

She is the daughter of my heart.

OBA, *rubbing the rosary convulsively*

I am dying. . . . Ah . . . Ah . . . I am
sure. . . . I can see something like a large
hole in front of me. . . . Ah . . . Ah . . .
Can one die with horns like these . . . like a
beast?

*[She cries and saliva drips from her
mouth.]*

OYUCHA

Mother . . . mother . . . you cry . . . it
is good. We will comfort you.

[She wipes her stepmother's face.]

OBA

You are not afraid . . . you still care for
me. . . . Ah . . . Ah . . . your heart is so
tender . . . I am ashamed . . .

OYUCHA

No . . . no . . . am I not your faithful
daughter?

THE HORNS

OBA

Oh! I know . . . I have been cruel to you . . . poor child. Ah . . . Ah . . . worse than cruel . . . criminal . . . can you forgive? . . . Ah . . . Ah . . . and still . . . after all, you still love and care for me!

OYUCHA

Yes, mother . . . I will always love you.

OBA, *crying pitifully*

Oyucha . . . I want to take you in my arms, once. . . .

[They all look surprised. The fire dies out.]

OYUCHA

You . . . mother. . . .

OBA

No . . . I cannot ask such a thing. . . .
Ah . . . Ah . . . I am bad . . . and ugly.
. . . Ah . . . Ah . . . you are afraid of me. . . .

OYUCHA

Oh! mother, no, I am not. . . .

[She throws herself into OBA's arms, and the old woman, feeling some tenderness for the child she so long despised, caresses her hair gently while

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

a faint smile lingers on her lips. Suddenly the horns, released like magic from the woman's head, roll on the floor.

PRIEST

A miracle!

[MOGI and the servant, startled, get up hurriedly. OBA, realizing what has happened, feels her bare head with trembling hands, and a beautiful smile, a smile from the heart, illumines her face. Her eyes seem as if seeing some vision of gladness ahead, as she sinks on her bed to pass away quietly. All kneel with bent heads, while the

PRIEST says:

And Buddha told the learned men: "I say to those sitting near me because they were born to be good, that a little kindness in the heart of the wicked born brings him even nearer to me."

CURTAIN

THE HANDS IN THE BOX

CHARACTERS

KOGAMORI, *A Dissolute State Minister*

SHIJIWA, *His Counsellor*

TOYO, *A Beautiful Dancer*

MICHI, *A Singer*

ASA

CHIYO

MISAO

KAMEYO

TAMARYO

KOME

SADA

ORINO

} *Geisha Girls*

THE WIFE OF KOGAMORI

TWO CHILDREN

WOMEN SERVANTS

SAMURAI, GUARDS AT THE PALACE

THE HANDS IN THE BOX

*The scene is laid in the reception room of
KOGAMORI'S Palace in Kyoto.*

Time: Sixteenth Century

The stage represents a square room decorated with golden peonies, and lighted by six large paper lamps. A door at the right leads inside the Palace. A large back door leads into the garden. Both are closed. The flowery way at the left side of the audience is covered with rose leaves.

As the curtain goes up, KOGAMORI is discovered sitting on a three-legged stool in the centre of the room. SHIJIWA is seated at his right on a lower stool. Both of them are finely dressed in flowing robes and long pantaloons of red and black. Several samurai are seated on the floor near the right hand door. They wear armor of red and black.

KOGAMORI, fanning himself with a black fan on which is painted a red sun

Shijiwa, have you provided for my entertainment? Have you brought the ten most beautiful geishas of Japan here tonight?

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

SHIJIWA

I have . . . kind lord. They are outside awaiting your pleasure.

KOGAMORI

Let us not lose any time. I am anxious to gaze upon these beauties! Send the samurai to duty into the Palace, and let no one disturb us.

SHIJIWA, *rising and speaking to the samurai*

The lord Kogamori bids you go out and guard faithfully for the peace of all.

[The samurai, bowing very low, go out through the right door, which they close behind them.]

SHIJIWA

May I call the geishas?

KOGAMORI

Call them, one after another. . . .

SHIJIWA, *beating two short split bamboos against each other*

The most beautiful Asa from Kagoshina.
[A beautiful girl in light-blue kimono and dark-blue obi appears on the flowery way and comes slowly toward the stage.]

THE HANDS IN THE BOX

KOGAMORI

So she is; and tell me, Asako, are you a good girl?

[ASA, prostrated before KOGAMORI, does not dare look at him.]

Come and tell me in the ear what you can do to please a man. . . .

[ASA hesitates, but seeing that KOGAMORI bends his head so as to listen to her she comes near him, opens her fan and, hiding her face behind it, whispers into his ear.]

KOGAMORI, *disdainfully*, to SHIJIWA

You should have left this baby in the arms of her mother . . . let me see another one.

[ASA walks sadly to the back of the stage and kneels down at the extreme left so as to give room to the other girls.]

SHIJIWA, *beating the bamboo sticks*.

The marvellous Chiyo from Nagasaki.

[A girl in brown kimono and red obi appears]

KOGAMORI

What a plump little fairy! Come, Chiyo, tell me in the ear how you would love me if I asked you to.

[The previous scene between ASA and KOGAMORI is repeated. A third and

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

a fourth geisha are introduced in like manner and the same thing happens, with minor differences in the manner of acting, according to the mood and character of the girls.

KOGAMORI

You are stupid, Shijiwa, to bring such brainless creatures here. Let me see the next one. . . .

[CHIYO walks away and kneels down at the right of ASA.]

SHIJIWA, *clapping the bamboo sticks*

The sweet Misao from Sendai.

[MISAO in white kimono and cream obi appears]

KOGAMORI

That small thing must be less than ten years old. . . . However, I will lend an eager ear to your berry mouth, my child. Tell me why you would be mine.

[Similar action as before with same result.]

To the wall, my wingless angel . . . great is my deception. Next. . . .

SHIJIWA, *as KAMEYO appears in green kimono and black obi*

The wonderful Kameyo from Hoygo.

THE HANDS IN THE BOX

KOGAMORI

Tall and willowy. . . . Very pleasing to the eye. Tell me, Kameyo . . . how many kisses do you know?

[Similar scene as above.]

Is that all? . . . There is room for improvement, and I think . . . you may be a fair pupil . . . but . . . go. . . . Shijiwa.

SHIJIWA, *as TAMARYO appears in grey kimono*

The glorious Tamaryo from Tomioka.

KOGAMORI

She is glorious. Listen, Tamaryo . . . I want to hear from you what particular caress you will offer me should I ask you to live in the Palace. . . . (*Same scene as before, but this time KOGAMORI pushes the girl aside.*) I am disgusted . . . positively disgusted. These women know less than a newborn monkey. Proceed . . . Shijiwa . . . proceed. . . .

[SHIJIWA announces the girls as they come in, but they go directly where the other girls are already kneeling. KOGAMORI now busies himself with filling his pipe and does not even look at them.]

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

SHIJIWA

The pretty Komé from Kyoto (*in red kimono, lilac obi*).

The joyful Sada from Osaka (*in purple kimono, gold obi*).

The nightingale Michi from Nikko (*in dark blue kimono, silver obi*).

KOGAMORI, *lifting his head*

Michi . . . a nightingale . . . I will take a chance and ask you to let me hear the song you know best.

MICHI *sings*

Tsuyu no hinuma no asagao no
Terasu hukage no tsure naki ni aware!
Hito mura same no
Hara, hara, to Furehashi.¹

KOGAMORI

Your song to the morning glory is dear to my heart. I shall remember. . . .

SHIJIWA, *as ORINO appears in orange kimono, green obi*

The handsome Orino from Morioka.

KOGAMORI

This is a color I am very fond of, but I have not seen a face out of the ordinary!

¹ "Asagao," a well-known song, the translation of which is: O morning glory, your life is sucked by the dew of the dawn. Then come the sun rays that drink the dew. I pity you. Let a cloud come so you shall live longer.

THE HANDS IN THE BOX

SHIJIWA

I have kept her for the last, my lord . . . allow your eyes to gaze upon the magnificent Toyo from Yeddo.

[A wonderful girl, TOYO, appears dressed all in rose.]

KOGAMORI

She is indeed a walking cherry blossom. Come near me, Toyo, for I want to ask you a question. What would you do to become my favorite geisha?

[TOYO dances a characteristic step.]

KOGAMORI, greatly pleased

I have at last found an intelligent and pretty woman. I want her to remain in the Palace as long as she likes . . . and now give me some wine and more dances.

[All the girls get up and coming to the front of the stage join TOYO in the dance of the fans. Meantime SHIJIWA has gone to the right door and given instructions to some one outside. Several women servants bring bottles of sake and gold cups. One of them removes the three-legged stools so that KOGAMORI and SHIJIWA sit comfortably on the floor. KOGAMORI

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

drinks heavily and by the time the dance is over he is rather excited.

KOGAMORI

That is not enough; you must now show me the Temptation dance. . . .

SHIJIWA

My lord . . . do you not think it better to send them away. . . .

KOGAMORI

Who asks for your advice, Shijiwa? . . . Here, drink a cup of sake . . . it is God's creation.

[SHIJIWA receives reverently between his hands the cup that KOGAMORI fills up to the brim.]

SHIJIWA

To your health and glory, my lord. . . .

[Both drink ceremoniously. The geishas begin another dance in which at each different figure they remove part of their garments. Each one of the dancers in turn comes in front of KOGAMORI and tempts him by some lascivious posture until he tries to kiss her. Suddenly the right door is opened quickly and KOGAMORI's wife enters dressed in a resplendent cos-

THE HANDS IN THE BOX

tume of red and black. She walks majestically, followed by her children, a boy, a girl, and four servants also richly dressed. Everybody comes to a sudden standstill, and KOGAMORI grabs his fan with rage. SHIJIWA and all the girls with bent heads do not dare to look at KOGAMORI's wife. But without paying the least attention to the party she walks out through the flowery way in a dignified manner.

KOGAMORI, *beside himself*

Whoever dared let my wife and children come into this room notwithstanding my express orders will be punished without delay.
. . . Shijiwa . . . I want all the men in charge of this door arrested and beheaded
. . . do you hear?

SHIJIWA

Yes, my lord.

[Shijiwa goes out.]

KOGAMORI, *drowning his anger in several cups of wine*

On with the dance.

[The geishas start the dance again. After a while KOGAMORI takes hold of TOYO and places her on his knees. She

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

tries to get away but he holds her tight and laughs.

TOYO

Please, my lord, let me go. . . .

KOGAMORI

No, no, my little bird, I want you . . .
you are mine. . . .

THE GEISHAS, *stopping in their dance*
Let her go, my lord.

KOGAMORI, *angry*

What! . . . Out with you all. . . .
Enough nonsense around. . . . Away from
here quick . . . or . . . you will repent.

*[He makes a threatening gesture and
the geishas run away, crowding
through the door and uttering fright-
ened cries.]*

KOGAMORI, *his arms around TOYO's waist*
Can I do as I please? . . . Hey! . . .
Toyo . . . will you be my little pet?

TOYO

My lord . . . you have drunk too much
. . . you ought to rest yourself.

KOGAMORI, *seizing TOYO by the hair in
excitement*

I am drunk, hey? Not good enough to
kiss this pretty mouth? How would you like

THE HANDS IN THE BOX

to be whipped until blood runs out of your body? (*He kisses her and then throws her brutally from him.*) Come back, come back, do not run away so soon. . . . I want to see your face . . . do not cry. (*TOYO sobs hysterically on the floor and does not move.*) Come, I say.

[*Thoroughly frightened, TOYO comes near him. He seizes her again by the hair and brings her face near his own. In her fear, however, TOYO repulses his face with her hands and manages to free herself. Enraged at the sacrilege of a geisha's hands on a state minister, he jumps up and pursues her, when, suddenly, his wife, children and women servants appear on the flowery way coming towards the stage. KOGAMORI steadies himself and sits down again, very red in the face. The geisha has knelt down crying silently. KOGAMORI's wife and her company walk in without noticing him.*]

KOGAMORI, *trembling with rage*

You have made a fool of me . . . no woman has refused my love . . . you alone . . . worse yet . . . my children saw me in disgrace. You shall dearly pay for it. . . .

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

Out of here . . . quick, and await my sentence.

TOYO, *lifting her arms imploringly*

I was afraid . . . my lord. . . .

[KOGAMORI, *with a terrible look, shows her the door, and she runs out quickly, almost bent in two*

KOGAMORI

Shijiwa!

SHIJIWA, *entering hurriedly*

Your pleasure, my lord. . . .

KOGAMORI

I order you to arrest Toyo, the geisha, and to cut off and bring me her hands.

SHIJIWA

The hands of Toyo san! . . . The most beautiful geisha. . . . I beg, my lord. . . .

KOGAMORI

You talk too much, Shijiwa. . . . I have told you already. I repeat . . . I want the hands of Toyo san. . . . I noticed how wonderfully pretty they are, and I want to preserve them as a souvenir of the treatment she gave me.

SHIJIWA

And . . . after her hands are severed . . . what shall we do to the girl?

THE HANDS IN THE BOX

KOGAMORI

Let her blood run out till she dies.

SHIJIWA

Your will shall be done.

KOGAMORI

When you go out you may send the other geishas in. . . . They are good dancers, and I want to find out whether it is Orino or Michi I like the best.

[SHIJIWA goes out and KOGAMORI lights a pipe. The geishas come in one after another.]

I have recalled you so that you dance the dance of the fans for me again. . . . And I want Michi to pour out some wine.

[MICHİ comes near and pours some wine into his cup. The other eight girls repeat the fan dance. KOGAMORI while flirting with MICHİ soon overdrinks and follows the dance, with to and fro movements of his body. Presently SHIJIWA enters carrying a round box about one foot high, with a cover on it. He places it in front of KOGAMORI, who removes the cover and looks inside with an evil smile. After

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

a while KOGAMORI, forgetting the box, closes his eyes under the influence of the wine. MICHU steals a glance into the box and is terror-struck. She suddenly gets up, joins the dancers, and spreads among them the horrible news of what she saw in the box. The dance stops and all the girls run away in panic.

KOGAMORI, *opening his eyes*
What has happened?

SHIJIWA

They have seen the contents of the box and it frightened them away.

KOGAMORI

Weak-hearted women . . . let them run away. . . . I am tired . . . leave me alone . . . my head is heavy . . . put out these strong lights; they burn my face.

SHIJIWA

At this time of the night, you will rest better in your private apartment.

KOGAMORI

I shall go very soon . . . but . . . I wish to rest here alone a moment . . . you can retire.

THE HANDS IN THE BOX

SHIJIWA

Good-night, my lord.

[He blows out the lights in the paper lanterns with the exception of one at each side of the back door, and goes out closing the partition behind him. The room is now in semi-obscurity. KOGAMORI gets up heavily and goes to the back door, which he slides open, disclosing a garden lighted by moonlight. He then blows out the two lamps, and comes back to his seat.]

KOGAMORI, *looking inside the box*

Lovely hands . . . you are whiter than the moon since the blood has left your veins. Indeed your caresses would smell of death, but you could not refuse to be good. . . . It seems that since you are lifeless I have gained some pleasure by feeling your icy touch. *(He takes the hands out and holds them between his palms so that the elbows seem to repose at the bottom of the box.)* It was a pity to remove you from such a beautiful body, but you tried to be cruel to your master. True, you are things of the past, yet I love to feel your velvet on my face. . . . I feel . . . it seems you are still alive.

[The moon shines full upon the box and in his delirium he places his head

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

between the hands, allowing them to caress his face, but suddenly the hands close around his throat as they just reach it, and they hold him in a grip of steel.

What is that! . . . Help! . . . let go . . .
ah . . . ah. . . .

[The hands are choking him slowly.

Toyo san . . . it's you . . . ah . . . ah. . . .

He tries in vain to release the hold. Presently, through a strange light behind the left panel of the room, TOYO, dressed all in white, appears, her loose hair hanging behind, her amputated arms all bloody. She is very pale and gazes at KOGAMORI with a face full of anguish. Slowly the vision disappears, and with a look of horror and a last groan the man rolls on the floor strangled to death. In the garden a nightingale sings his midnight song.

CURTAIN

FORSAKEN LOVE

A POETICAL COMEDY

Adapted from "Lay Priest Tagikuchi,"
a five-act comedy drama by Anizaki from the
novel of R. Takayama.

CHARACTERS

TOKIYORI, *Samurai, afterwards lay priest*
Tagikuchi

KIYOMORI, *Prime Minister*

MUNEMORI, }
TOMOMORI, } *His Sons*

MOCHİYORI, *Father of Tokiyori*

SHIKEGAKE, }
SUKEMORI, } *Officers in the Army; Noble-*
men under Kiyomori

YOKOBUE, *A young girl servant at Kiyomori's palace*

KOBAL, *An old woman servant*

UTAKICHI, *Head female servant*

FIRST SERVANT

SECOND SERVANT

THIRD SERVANT

AN OLD WOMAN

JIRO, }
TARO, } *Schoolboys*
SABURO, }

THE FIRST CONCUBINE OF KIYOMORI

CONCUBINES, SAMURAI, GUESTS OF KIYOMORI

THREE MONKEYS

THE CHORUS

FORSAKEN LOVE

The action takes place at Kyoto about 1150.

SCENE I

The palace of Nishi-Hachijo.

CHORUS

RING, bell, slowly and sadly;
The flower of the cherry tree passes away,
All the world is vanity.
Thoughts are dispersed like flowers,
O glorious peace, O night of dreams,
See the lords who come to feast
And enjoy the festival of Spring.

[During the song the curtain goes up disclosing the garden of a beautiful palace of red and gold. The cherry trees are blossoming. Hundreds of paper lanterns are hanging from the branches. KIYOMORI is seated in the middle of the stage with his sons, MUNEMORI and TOMOMORI, then TOKIYORI and two vacant seats at his

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

right. Several concubines are on his left seated in the same order as the men. Other samurai are seated behind. SHIKEGAKE and SUKEMORI are dancing in front of the assembly. They wear beautiful costumes and carry in their hands branches of cherry blossoms. When they are through, UTAKICHI enters, followed by other servants bringing on a tray presents for the dancers.

UTAKICHI

These presents are offered you by our lord Kiyomori.

[The two samurai receive the presents with respect and go to the two vacant seats.]

KIYOMORI

Your dances are as pleasing to the eye as beautiful flowers are to our sense of smell. All the good of the world is here. I am sorry that my eldest son Shigemori is not present to enjoy this life.

MUNEMORI

My brother prays to the Buddha. I would rather sit looking at the cherry trees and enjoy dancing and drinking.

FORSAKEN LOVE

TOMOMORI

Father, tell our brother to pay more attention to the country's welfare than to the worship of Buddha.

KIYOMORI

Yes, indeed, I will tell him. Life ought to be spent in glory, but your brother thinks only of religion. O, life is like the cherry blossoms.

[The breeze blows a few petals from the cherry trees and they fall slowly to the ground. Kiyomori sits in sad thought.]

MUNEMORI

Father, do not be sad tonight.

KIYOMORI

Yes, let us forget our sorrows. Fill up our cups and let us drink to a pleasant future.

[All the samurai lift their cups which the servants have previously filled with sake. Then all bend respectfully toward the prime minister.]

ALL

To your glory! . . .

KIYOMORI

The feast will be incomplete without a geisha dance.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

THE FIRST CONCUBINE

I should like you to see a young girl servant of the Palace. She is not a geisha, but she dances better than the best of them all. She is a marvel.

KIYOMORI

I am anxious to see her.

THE FIRST CONCUBINE

Utakichi! (*The head servant comes forward.*) Is the girl ready?

UTAKICHI

Yes.

[*She goes to the left of the stage, where all the servants are kneeling, takes by the hand a young girl of unusual beauty, and leads her to the centre of the stage. Music begins and YOKOBUE dances. The samurai speak to each other in admiration of the dancing, and TOKIYORI, almost standing up, looks at her with ecstasy.*
[*The stage revolves.*

F O R S A K E N L O V E

SCENE II

The scene represents the gate of the Palace of Nishi-Hachijo. SAMURAI, followed by servants, go out of the Palace after the festival. They are talking to each other about the splendid reception they were given.

KOBAI, *coming out and walking to the front of the stage*

What a wonderful festival! It's a pity I am an old woman; I cannot enjoy it all!

TOKIYORI, *coming out of the gate, seeing the woman*

Kobai san! . . .

KOBAI

What can I do for you?

TOKIYORI

Can you tell me the name of the young woman who danced so wonderfully tonight?

KOBAI

Yes, she is Yokobue san. She came to serve in the Palace only a few days ago.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

But why do you want to know her name? . . .
Many men asked me the same question. . . .

TOKIYORI

She is such a beautiful dancer!

KOBAI, *laughing maliciously*

Ah! Ah! She is a beautiful dancer! Ah!
Ah!

*[She enters the Palace, and TOKIYORI
left alone looks at the ground with a
sigh.]*

CURTAIN

FORSAKEN LOVE

SCENE III

TOKIYORI'S room. *Very simple decoration. A box with armor on top. A rack with several swords at right. A rack with bow and arrows at left. TOKIYORI is sitting at a small desk. An ancient lamp lights him while he reads a manuscript. He puts the manuscript down very often to let his mind wander. When the curtain goes up the chorus sings and the cicada is heard outside.*

CHORUS

Even the voice of the cicada
Has not awakened my sleeping heart.
Love has deceived it and it feels distressed.
Last spring I fell in love with Yokobue,
She has changed the course of my life.
Nothing can cure me of such a folly.
Autumn breezes are singing outside,
Balancing the leaves of the maple tree,
The leaves going to death like my heart.

TOKIYORI

Such is love. To be a slave to love is to be
like a blind man throwing himself into a well.
(*He looks about the room and takes up a*

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

large sword.) What need have I of such a sword? I cannot even fight my bitterest enemy, my heart. (*Rising, he pulls the blade out and looks at it near the lamp; he then flourishes it a couple of times.*) Magnificent blade! What a joy to possess such a tremendous weapon. (*Looks at the image of his face in the blade.*) How thin my face has become! Ah, the work of love!

[*He replaces the sword on the rack and lowers his head sadly. The voice of the cicada is distinctly heard.*]

MOCHIYORI, *sliding open the back door from outside, looks in at his son*

Tokiyori!

TOKIYORI

Are you not sleeping yet?

MOCHIYORI

And you? I see in your face that you have been dreaming. (*He sits down on a seat slightly higher than TOKIYORI.*) During autumn nights it is better to sleep early. Are you well?

TOKIYORI

You are very kind to me, thank you. My head is not strong, but perhaps autumn will cure it. . . .

FORSAKEN LOVE

MOCHIYORI

You must be brave, brave with a strong heart. I desire you to obey me loyally, without fear.

TOKIYORI

I shall never thank you enough for the good principles you have taught me. Now I find the occasion to ask you something. Will you listen to me?

MOCHIYORI

What have you to say?

TOKIYORI

I have hesitated a long time before talking to you about it, but now the time has come. I should like to marry a young girl whom I think is worthy of my name. Will you allow me to take her as my wife?

MOCHIYORI

Who is she?

TOKIYORI

One of the servants of the prime minister.

MOCHIYORI

Is she one of our relations? . .

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

TOKIYORI

Not at all, for she is only a farmer's daughter.

MOCHIYORI

Are you mad?

TOKIYORI

No, indeed. To be the husband of this girl is the serious desire of my life. You taught me never to tell a lie.

MOCHIYORI

Indeed, this is the serious desire of your life! Do you know that marriage itself is the most serious thing in life? I have always hoped that you would marry a nobleman's daughter, to bring you rank and fortune. True, I have heard that you were in love with a certain Yokobue, but I did not pay attention to the rumor, for being in love with a servant girl at the Palace is the same as loving a courtesan, and it seemed ridiculous to me. Now you ask me to let you marry her. How dare you?

TOKIYORI

I have never given any thought to courtesans or drinking. What I ask you comes from a pure and simple heart. . . .

FORSAKEN LOVE

MOCHIYORI

My son, you deceive me very much. I can see now that during these last months, you have been thinking of nothing but love. Now I want to open your eyes. Shikegake, whom you know well, has had several mistresses; and the one who now receives his attention is no other than Yokobue. Hey! What do you say to that! Shikegake has already told me you were foolish to think about her. I cannot conceive why your mind wanders toward this girl for a minute. I am displeased with you. Remember that all our family is famous for celebrated feats of arms and that Naoyori, once prime minister, is among our ancestors. There is no story like yours in our annals. You do not look ashamed at all! As long as I live you shall not marry this peasant's daughter. (*He looks at TOKIYORI with terrible eyes.*) Well, Tokiyori, many men make mistakes during their youth. You must know that the strongest love never lasts ten years. For my sake give all your attention to your samurai duties; it will be more honorable, and you will wake up out of this dream. Change your spirit and you will become again the Tokiyori of my heart.

TOKIYORI, *who has been thinking deeply with inclined head, looking up at his father.*

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

Father, I was prepared for your answer long ago, and as a good son I shall do according to your desire and forget Yokobue. But now I want to ask you a favor that you will not refuse. . . . I hope. . . .

MOCHİYORI

You are a free samurai. What is your desire?

TOKIYORI

Allow me to leave you for a long time.

MOCHİYORI

Why?

TOKIYORI

It will surprise you, but my desire is not a mere fancy. I have made up my mind about it. There is no need for you to know the reason since I am a sane man. I have discovered that a man's life is as simple as his fortune and is not worth living. I have resolved to give up ephemeral glory in order to put all my hope in Buddha. I shall never forget your kindness, but the future life is more important. Please let me go and I shall bless you forever.

MOCHİYORI, *with tears in his voice*

Those are your words! You lost your mother when very young, and I have always

FORSAKEN LOVE

taken care of you. You have been well educated. I took pride in seeing you full of health and courage. You are not my son since you do not answer to the deep desire that I had to see you loyal and obedient. The prime minister has already showed us many favors and was again well disposed to you. What will he say when he hears that you have become a beggar of a priest? Your wish is that of a coward. Admit that you have had a moment of folly. If not, beg pardon at once for your foolish words. . . . (*He looks at his son with terrible eyes, but TOKIYORI remains silent.*) Tokiyori, why do you not answer?

TOKIYORI

My heart bleeds when I think of the pain I am causing you. Although I wish to be loyal to the prime minister and yourself, there is something stronger that calls for my services elsewhere.

MOCHIYORI

What are you talking about? Is there a stronger duty than serving your country and father? Your mind is failing and you are no longer a samurai.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

TOKIYORI

The honor of a samurai always remains, but the affairs of the other world are more important. Shigemori, first son of the prime minister, is himself a priest!

MOCHIIYORI

Nothing, do you hear, nothing is more important than the service of His Majesty. You must not compare yourself to Shigemori. You are losing your senses. Even dogs do not forget the favors of their master, therefore you are worse than a dog. I am not your father any more and I forbid you or your spirit to join our kinsfolk until your seventh life.

[MOCHIIYORI works himself into a rage while looking at his son until, unable to control himself, he leaves the room. TOKIYORI does not stop him, but looks painfully at the door through which he went out.]

TOKIYORI, *with a deep sigh*

O! Father, pardon my disobedience.

[The stage revolves.]

FORSAKEN LOVE

SCENE IV

The room of YOKOBUE in the Palace of Nishi-Hachijo. A shamisen is hanging on the wall. Books and rolls of manuscripts on shelves. On the floor, a box with books inside. A little desk lighted by a candle. YOKOBUE is sitting at right. Three servant girls at left. The servants whisper to each other.

FIRST SERVANT

Yokobue is very unconcerned although she knows that a samurai is now wearing the Buddhist robe on her account.

SECOND SERVANT

No, she has a pretty face but she uses it to catch the men, not to cry for them.

THIRD SERVANT

Don't be so cruel. Yokobue does not believe us yet. (*To Yokobue.*) What we told you is not a lie. Tokiyori has laid down the samurai's armor to worship Buddha.

YOKOBUE

It is not possible. I cannot believe such a story.

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

SECOND SERVANT

Then, you do not believe that a man can forsake the world if the most beautiful girl refuses him?

YOKOBUE

No, I do not believe it.

THIRD SERVANT

It is absolutely true. He lives now all alone at the temple of Saga.

FIRST SERVANT

Tokiyori was refused by Yokobue san.

THIRD SERVANT

He became a priest at Saga.

FIRST SERVANT

The lamentations of his father are heart-breaking.

SECOND SERVANT

At least there is less competition for your admirers. I know one for whom you will be kinder.

THIRD SERVANT

We tell you the truth. If you are sad on his account say some prayers to the Buddha; it will surely comfort him. It is getting late, we must retire.

FORSAKEN LOVE

FIRST SERVANT

Yokobue san, if you dream tonight, do not forget to tell us about it tomorrow.

SECOND SERVANT

We have no love troubles and so we shall sleep soundly.

THE THREE SERVANTS

Good night!

[They go out. YOKOBUE, who all the time has assumed a haughty and unconcerned air, falls down head first to the floor and cries bitterly.]

YOKOBUE

Forgive me, Tokiyori! *(She puts her handkerchief between her teeth to stop her sobbing.)* I well understood your love for me, and I read all your letters but never dared answer you. I was afraid to lose the friendship of the other samurai. Why did you leave the world so soon? *(She pauses for a moment in thought.)* I did not know you loved me so much. *(She weeps again and takes some letters from a desk. Opening a folded paper she holds it near the candle and reads.)* "What do you think of me writing you such witless words, but since I saw your loveliness my heart is broken and I can think of nothing but you. Although my

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

writings are not worth your eyes I hope you will understand. . . ." (*She folds the paper.*) It is my fault I did not understand you till this day. (*She opens another letter and reads.*) "I have understood that you do not love me, and I am afraid to displease you by writing again. There is only one medicine for me, to forsake love and become a priest. . . . (*She sighs.*) . . . If, however, you read over the hundred letters I have written you since spring, you will feel my heart beating. For I have put it, whole, into each one of them. I have nothing else to write. Perhaps my hand has been unable to guide my words to your heart. Oh, if you only knew my heart. Will you never answer me?" (*She weeps again, then taking a book out of the box she reads a short poem.*)

"I shall cry for Love,

Who felt the sadness of the autumnal breeze. . . .

All insects die during the sorrowful night."

KOBAI, *opening the door and looking at YOKOBUE maliciously*

Are you not sleeping yet?

YOKOBUE, *composing herself and putting the letter in the desk quickly*

Kobai san! What do you want at such an hour of the night?

F O R S A K E N L O V E

KOBAI, *sitting beside* YOKOBUE

You have no pity for men. There is a samurai outside who is dying of love for you. Do you want to send him away as usual? What shall I tell him?

YOKOBUE

My answer is the same as before and shall always be so.

KOBAI

You are very cruel to Shikegake, who is losing his head over you. He has come in the cold to hear his fate from your lips. At such an hour of the night! He is doing that for you. Now, all the samurai want to marry you. I suppose, if you refuse Shikegake and he commits suicide you will be glad.

YOKOBUE

I don't care.

KOBAI

Do not say that. Of course you don't want to marry him, but give him some hope in order to retain his protection. You are pretty now, but beauty does not last long, and those who are too hard are finally left alone. Do you think Shikegake is not rich enough, or are you thinking of Tokiyori? If that is so, you may rest easy, for he is now

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

a lay priest. You should be kind to Shikegake, who is going to obtain a high position. Do not deceive him this time. You know that I speak in your interest. (YOKOBUE *does not answer.* KOBAI *pulls her by the sleeve.*) Don't you understand. . . .

YOKOBUE

I beg your pardon, Kobai san. I am not a common woman, and I will not give myself to a man recklessly. I do not want to be kind to anyone at this hour of the night, and your criticisms are very unpleasant to me. (*She turns her back to KOBAI, who looks shocked at first, and then goes angrily out.*) Fools! I do not want to hear words that take my mind away from the thought of Tokiyori. I will never marry Shikegake. I am now sure that Tokiyori has a good and loyal heart. He loved me more than other men since he has forsaken the world thinking I did not love him. (*She sighs.*) I am the cause of all this trouble because I did not answer his letters. I must go and beg his pardon. I shall explain everything to him and tell him the deep love I have in my heart for him. If he does not understand me I shall become a nun. (*She rises with determination.*) I have decided to go tomorrow, but I will play on the shamisen once more.

FORSAKEN LOVE

(*She takes her shamisen and plays a sad tune.*) Oh! I shall say good-by to everything tomorrow morning. (*Drawing a little dagger from her belt she cuts the strings of the shamisen.*) I have now severed my last connection with this world.

CURTAIN

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

SCENE V

The temple Ojo in the fields of Saga. On the left side of the stage one of the rooms of the temple is exposed to view. The roof is partly broken, as is a portico and verandah in front. From the room a door leads to the altar and through the paper door slightly opened the lay priest TAGIKUCHI¹ (TOKIYORI) is seen reading a book. Another door leads into a small garden with a fountain, enclosed by a gate. On the half broken stone there is a sign reading, "Ojo Temple."

As the curtain goes up JIRO, TARO and SABURO are playing with idols of clay. TARO breaks JIRO's plaything.

JIRO

Taro broke the idol that I so carefully made. I promised grandmother to bring her an idol made of Ojo Temple-clay, and now it's broken. Give me another one at once.

[He cries.]

TARO

I am glad I broke it. The other day your grandmother ogled me like an owl and said, "Bad boy." I am avenged.

¹ A man changes his name when he becomes a Buddhist priest.

FORSAKEN LOVE

JIRO

My grandmother was right. You avenge yourself on Buddha's image. Even a Chinaman wouldn't do it. Give me another one.

SABURO

Taro, you are wrong always to tease boys smaller than yourself.

TARO

Jiro always cries and tells his grandmother.

[He beats JIRO, who yells. SABURO tries to quiet them.]

THE LAY PRIEST, *appearing on the verandah*

Why do you make so much noise? Can you not play without quarrelling? Taro, you are big and should protect the small boys. Jiro, you should not cry all the time. If you have broken your idol, make another one. Artificial things do not always last and can be easily replaced. The night is coming. Go to your parents. Come back tomorrow. Chestnuts are growing ripe. I shall pick some for you.

[The children group themselves near the LAY PRIEST.]

SABURO

You are very good to give us chestnuts. We will not fight any more, but go home

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

quietly. Will you give more chestnuts to the best one of us?

THE LAY PRIEST

Yes! Yes! You are a clever little man. Go home now and be good. Dinner is ready and your families are waiting.

THE BOYS, *as they go out*

Good-night, uncle!

THE LAY PRIEST

Sweet little hearts! How well they listen to good advice. I wish all men were like these children. Now I must begin my night prayers.

[Goes to the garden to wash his hands at the fountain. At the same time an old woman with a basket full of apples comes from the right.]

THE OLD WOMAN

Good evening, good priest, have you seen my grandson?

THE LAY PRIEST

Oh, good evening! You are Jiro's grandmother. Your grandson has just left with two little friends.

F O R S A K E N L O V E

THE OLD WOMAN

Is that possible! How strange I did not meet them. Well, I was coming here to offer these apples to the Buddha. Please take them.

THE LAY PRIEST

Thank you very much. I will offer them tonight, and tomorrow I will offer chestnuts.

THE OLD WOMAN

It is getting dark. I must go away. Do not forget me in your prayers.

THE LAY PRIEST

The last days of autumn are short. You must be careful on your way home. (*He comes out of the garden and accompanies the old woman.*) Good-by. Sleep well tonight and think of Buddha's paradise.

THE OLD WOMAN

Thank you for your kindness to my grandson and myself. [*Exit.*]

[*Night is falling. The stars and moon come out.*]

THE LAY PRIEST, *walking into the garden and closing the gate*

He who loved a young girl of the city now receives the attentions of an old country woman. How life changes in a short time!

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

The gaieties of spring drift into autumn sorrows. (*He goes to the altar and lights several candles. Kneeling down he begins worshipping Buddha aloud. Two large monkeys and a small one come out of the woods and run around playfully. They jump on the verandah and seem to listen to the prayer. It is now very dark. The LAY PRIEST, carrying a candle, comes to the verandah and addresses the monkeys.*) Oh, monkeys. So you have come again to pay me a visit. Do you understand my prayers to Buddha, or are you only coming to get some fruit? Here, Jiro's grandmother gave me these apples, take some of them. (*He hands them several apples which they quickly grab and run away with joyful capers.*) When I was in the world, all men bored me, but now even the society of animals is a balm to my heart. What has become of my kinsfolk and the party of Tokiyori? Perhaps I should have stood by them to fight for the clan. But, then, I would have remained a man; a man strong in the body but weak in heart. Suffering for a heartless woman. Now all is peace. (*The sound of insects is heard distinctly.*) I can look for hours at the sky and try to find the meaning of all those twinkling eyes that look down from above. I have

FORSAKEN LOVE

never loved the beauty of night more than now as the moon comes out of the clouds. I must take care that the clouds of passion do not trouble my soul. (*The moon rises slowly and illumines the rice fields.*)

Oh, the moon is rising very fast in the sky! It must be late. I will read a little and say my prayers again before retiring.

[He gazes at the moon for a moment while the sounds of the insects grow in intensity, then he closes the paper doors in front of the room, and only the light of the candles can be seen through them by the audience.]

CHORUS

There are many ways of love,
The love of Buddha is perhaps best.
Yokobue has left the Palace
To come and explain her conduct.
She has forsaken a life of luxury
And walked many, many days
To see the man she did not understand.

[YOKOBUE enters dressed in a nun's garment of brocaded silk with white veil and black pantaloons.]

YOKOBUE

I have been told that the Ojo Temple is not far away. An old man told me to walk

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

toward the Saga fields and the light of this house brought me here.

CHORUS

A light shining across the deep grass.
It is the retreat of a lost lover.
From afar I saw the shadow of my darling priest.

[YOKOBUE walks to the temple gate and sees the sign.]

YOKOBUE

How fortunate! It is the temple I am looking for.

[She knocks at the gate, but at the same moment a bell rings and the voice of the LAY PRIEST is heard praying to Buddha.]

Is this the Ojo Temple? I have come a long way from Kyoto to see the priest Tagikuchi. Please open the gate. *(She knocks again but the bell and voice do not stop.)* No answer even though I knock hard. But I am foolish to do so at the time of worshipping. I have been told that a priest will not be disturbed even by the Emperor. I shall wait.

FORSAKEN LOVE

CHORUS

A serene heart will not be disturbed.
This is a place of rest.
Breezes play around the leaves;
Their falling marks the time
Ever flying, ever flying.
[*The sound of the bell is heard, YOKO-
BUE knocks again at the gate.*]

YOKOBUE

Will you kindly open the door, I have something to tell you.

THE LAY PRIEST, *from inside*

This is the Ojo Temple. You are wrong to call here at night.

YOKOBUE

No, I am not wrong. I have come to speak to the priest Tagikuchi, formerly Tokiyori, who is a relative of Mochiyori Saito.

THE LAY PRIEST

Yes, I am Tagikuchi. Who are you?

YOKOBUE

I am ashamed, but I must tell you. I am Yokobue, who served at the Palace of the Prime Minister. I want to say that I did not return your kindness because I was afraid of the jealousy of other men, and I wanted to

PLAYS OF OLD JAPAN

be friendly with all. I realized my mistake only after I heard you had given up your duties of samurai to become a priest. I felt sorry for you and understood the cruelty in not answering your letters. I could not rest in peace until I told you everything. I hope you will be kind and not leave me outside in the night. Please open the gate, please, please. . . .

[She leans against the gate and cries.]

THE LAY PRIEST

I have known a woman called by your name while I was a man of the world, but she would not hear of me. Now, I have no love in my heart. I pray Buddha in the morning and in the evening to help me to forget my former life. I may not listen to a charming voice again. My love and hope belong to Buddha, and therefore my eyes, ears and mouth cannot be attracted by a woman any more. I am sorry, but you must go back into the dark night, and walk away quickly. I will not speak again. Yokobue san, farewell in this world, may we meet again in the other.

YOKOBUE

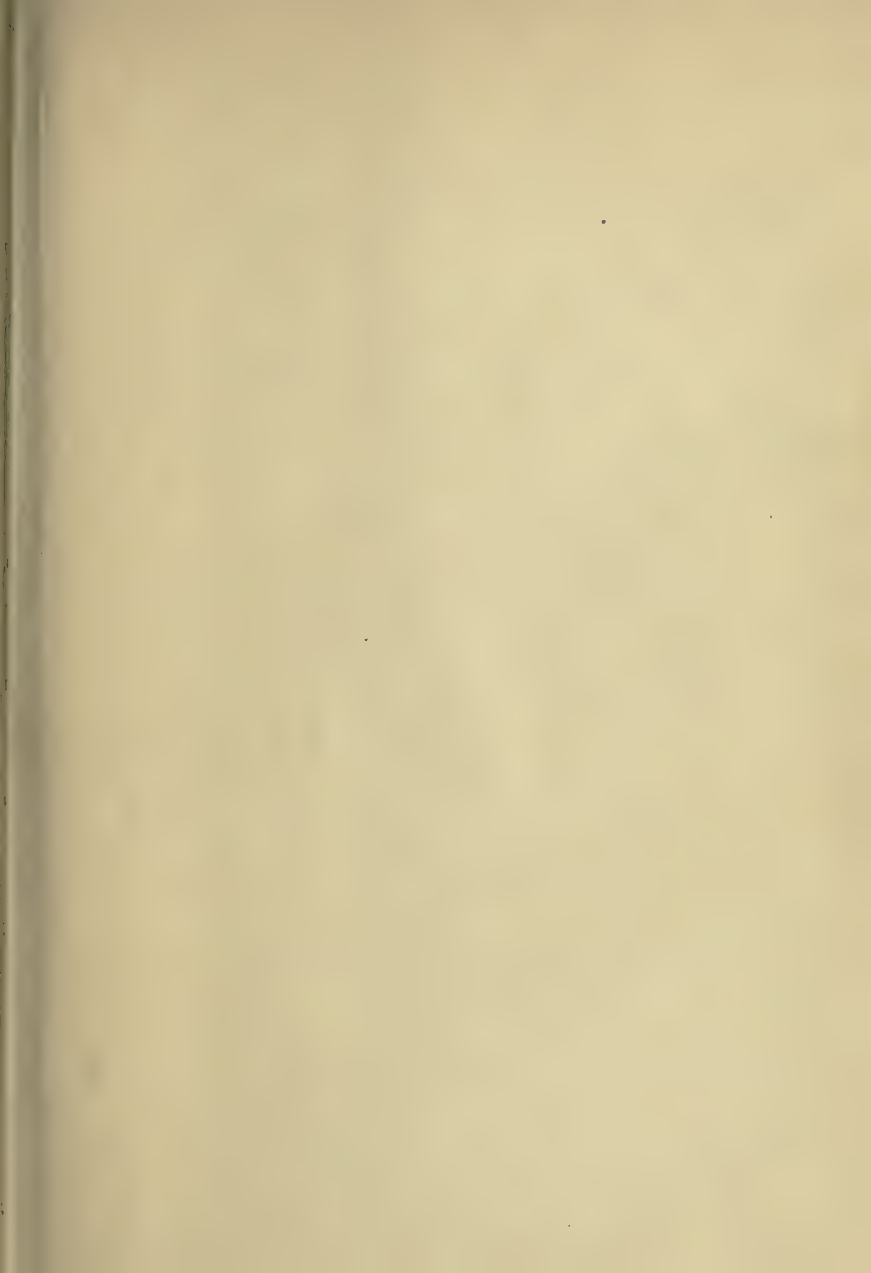
You are right; but since I have come to tell you the secret of my heart you should not be so hard and cruel. I am ready to atone

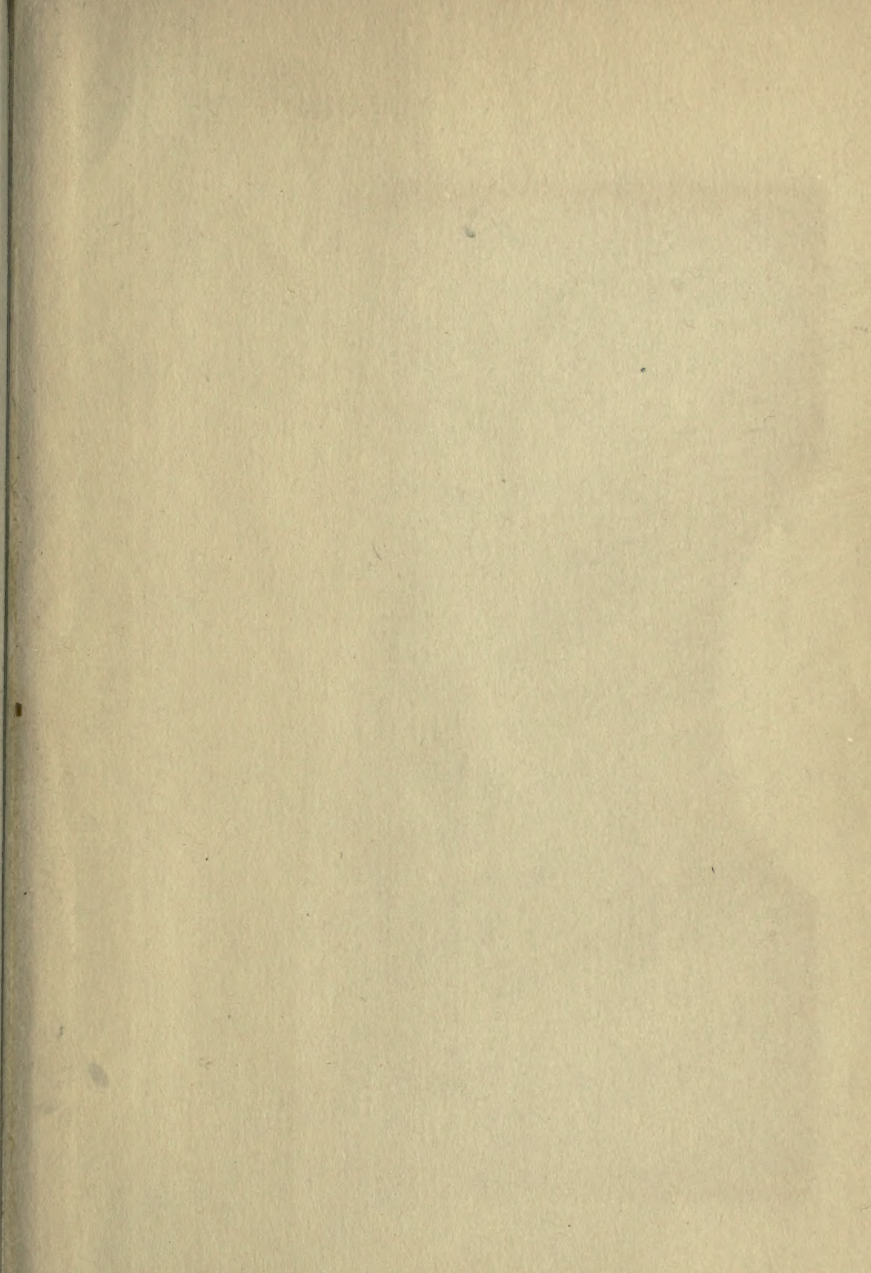
FORSAKEN LOVE

for my unkindness with my own body, if it please you to use it. If I go away without obtaining your pardon I shall never live in peace, and I am afraid we may not meet in the future life. Please open the door so that I can see you. (*As she speaks the last words the bell begins ringing again, clouds cover the moon and the wind suddenly rises.*) Why do you not open the door? Will you be dead forever to me? A samurai must have some pity. (*The sounds of the bell and wind increase.*) You have forsaken love, but you have lost your heart at the same time. I am a wretched woman. Even in a nun's robes I will never be at peace. Can you not save me? (*The sound of the bell is very loud. YOKOBUE pulls her hair and tears her clothes into shreds in her despair.*) Merciless priest, merciless priest, how shall I ever forget! . . . (*She weeps.*) Oh, poor Yokobue, did you know love and sorrow are one and the same thing?

[She faints and falls to the ground. The sounds cease and the lighted candles within the temple are extinguished.]

CURTAIN





62

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